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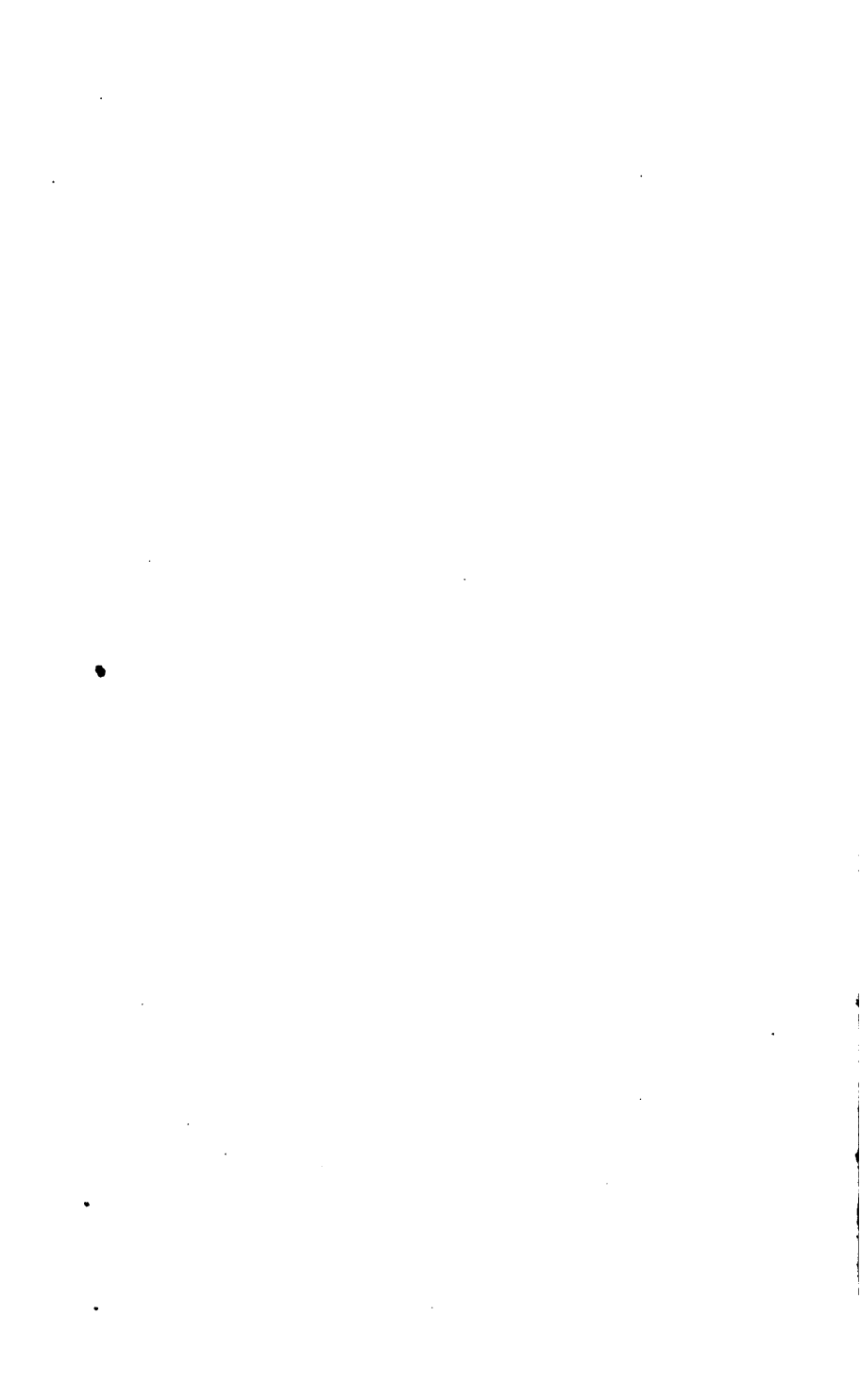
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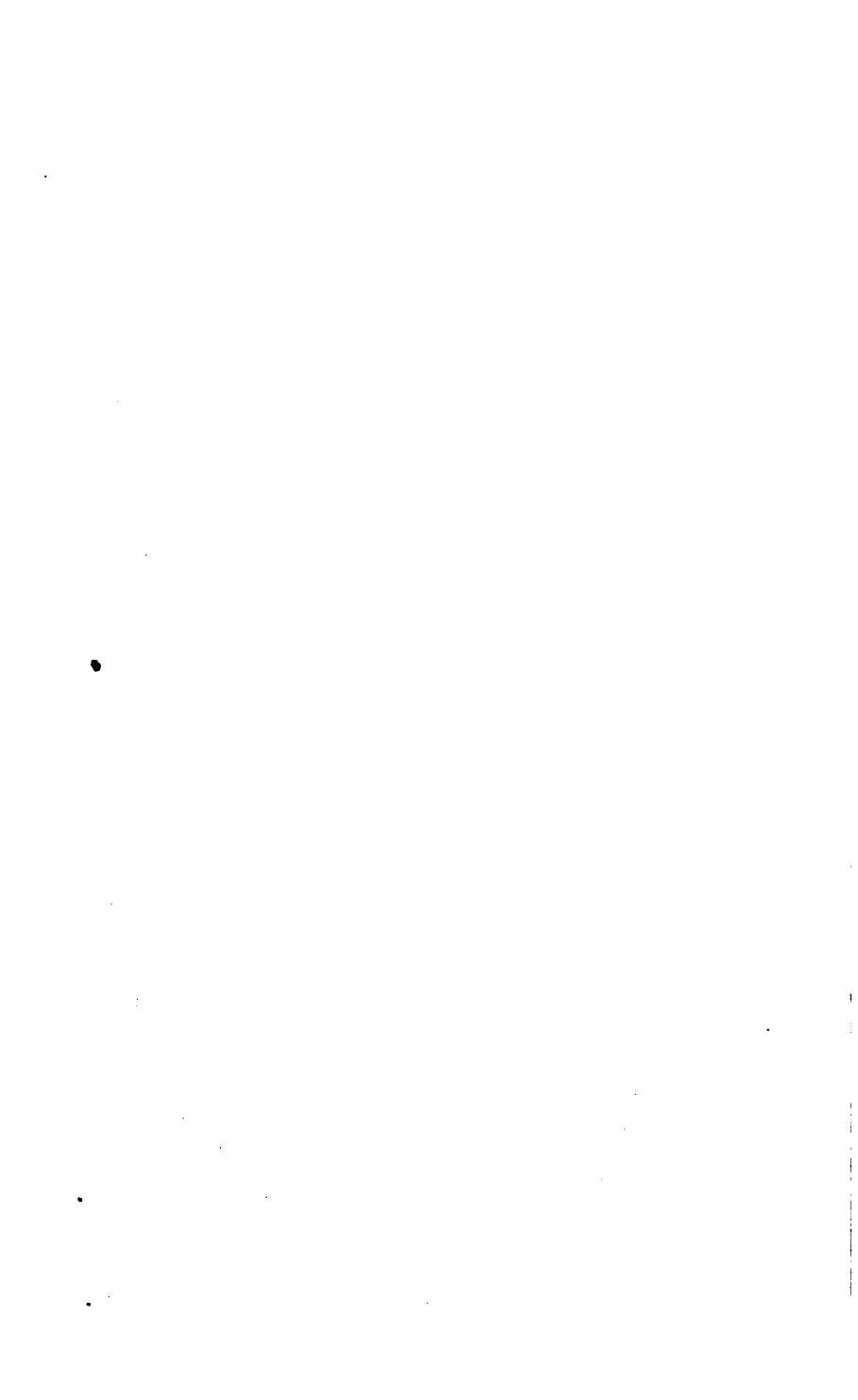
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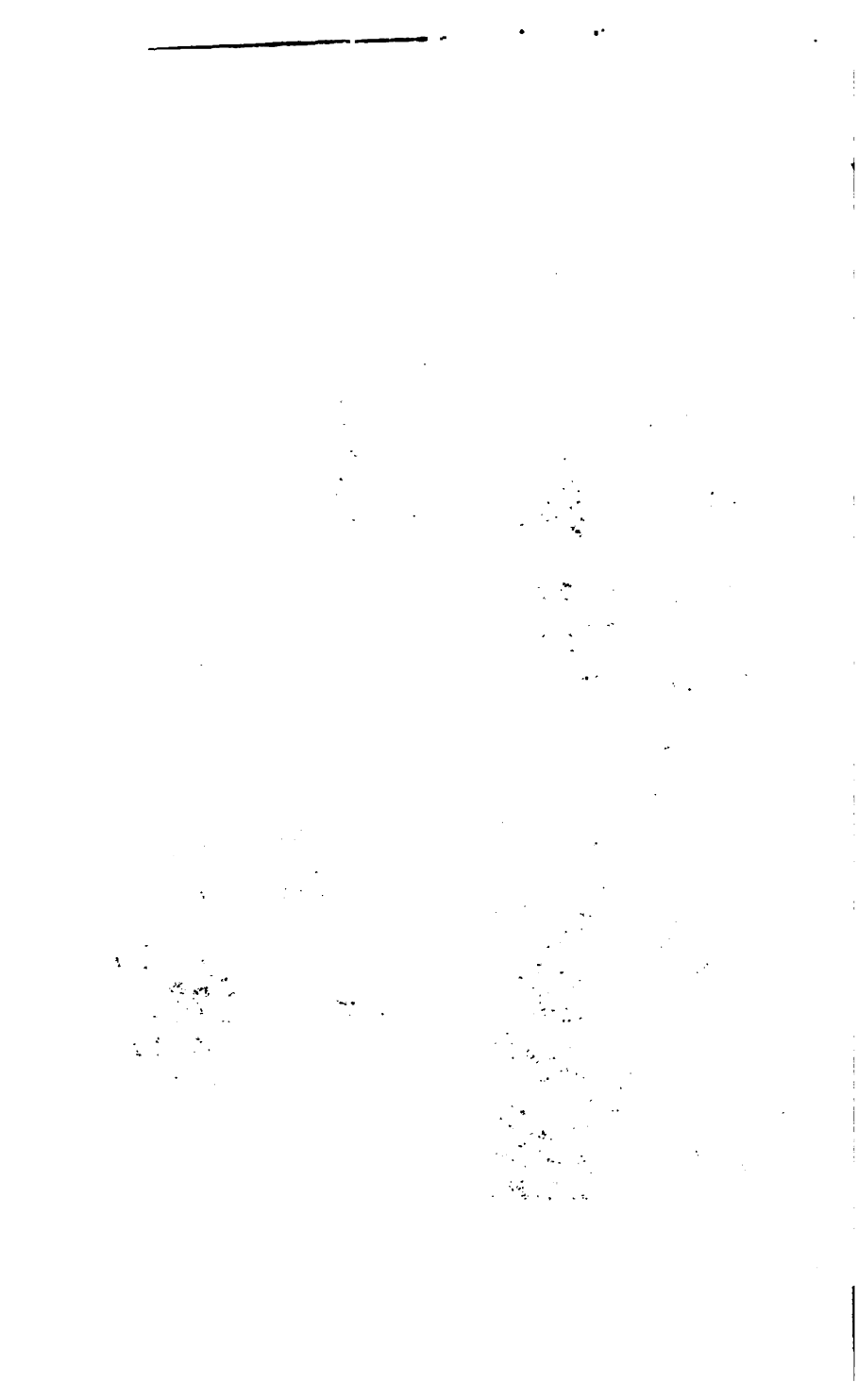


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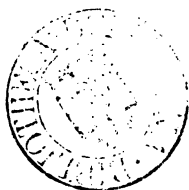


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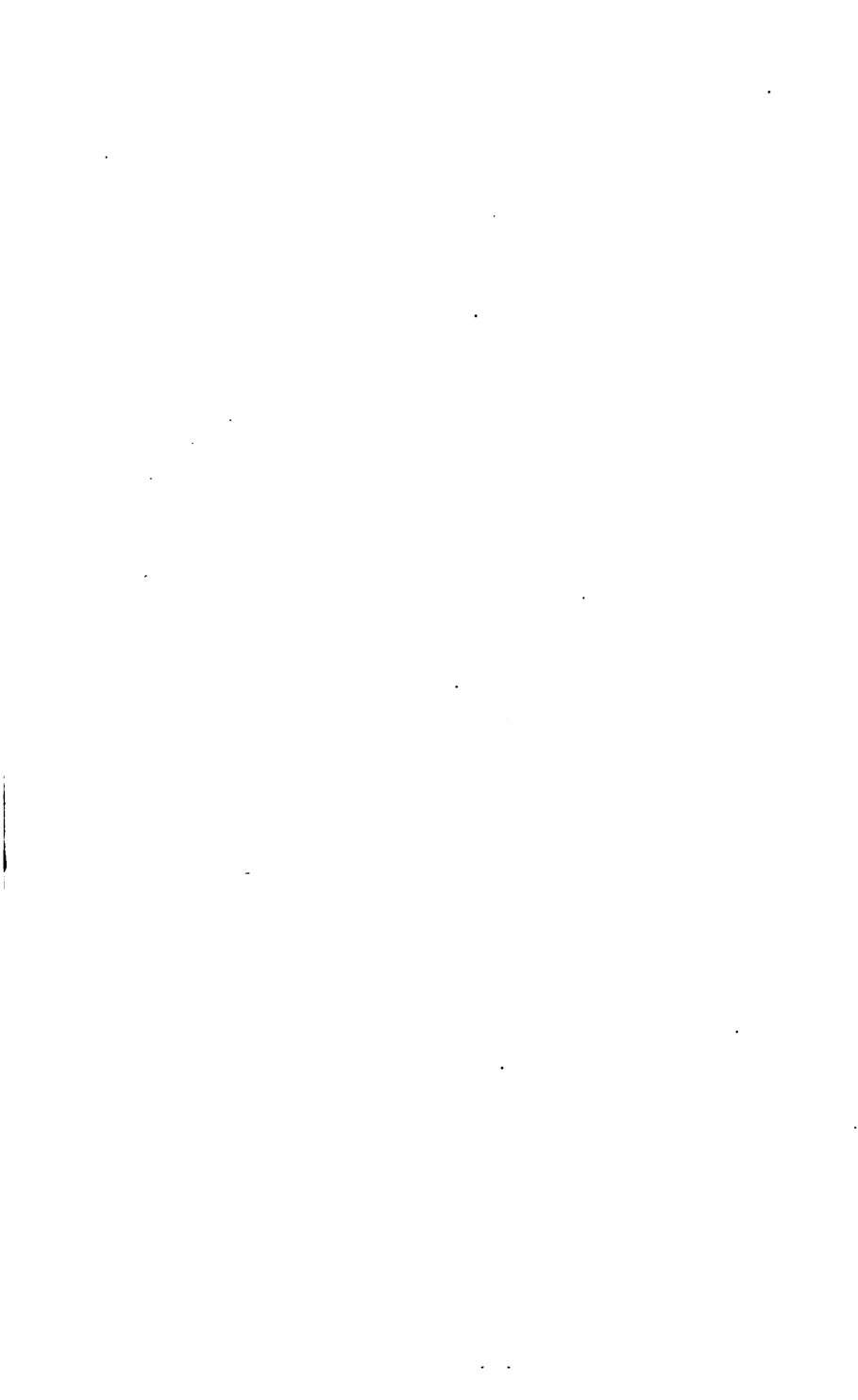


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P R E F A C E.

THE following narrative is little more than a transcript of my Journal, kept for private reference, and which was not originally intended for the press. It has been my aim throughout to give a faithful delineation of Life, Customs, and Manners in this interesting Colony, so far as my own personal experience extended.

LONDON,
November, 1850.



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SIERRA LEONE AND THE GAMBIA.

CHAPTER I.

FEELINGS ON LEAVING ENGLAND FOR AFRICA. — PREPARATIONS FOR SAILING. — PARTING WITH MY FAMILY. — TROUBLES IN DOCK. — LAST NIGHT, AND MISERIES ON BOARD. — AT LAST, FAIRLY OFF.

It was in the year 1845 that I embarked for that part of the world, not less infamous for its nefarious traffic in slavery than proverbial for the deadly unhealthiness of its climate. My feelings on this occasion were probably those of most other men who are proceeding to such a place as Sierra Leone, so fatal to Europeans, and not inappropriately called by a resident there, “a lovely charnel-house.” For I must inform my reader, that the country is no less remarkable for a peculiar kind of beautiful scenery than its hostility to human life. Great, therefore, as my curiosity might be to see the Western Coast of Africa, it was not without mingled sensations of hope and

fear that I took leave of my native country, and bade farewell to those, with whom I might never again, perhaps, exchange the pleasures of friendship or endearments of home.

I had naturally enough cherished the hope that, after five years' exposure to a tropical sun in the Bahamas, where duties of the most arduous and trying nature had wrought their severe effects on my constitution, I should have enjoyed some little rest and tranquillity in Old England; but a new and more extensive field of usefulness appeared in the designs of Providence to await me; and although not very credulous in attaching more than ordinary importance to the common casualties of life, I could not help attributing some weight to the circumstance connected with my appointment to the chaplaincy on the coast; as it had been already, on a former occasion, in my power to have accepted it, but was then considered by me little better than a stepping-stone into an unnatural grave.

Glad, however, as I should have been to have had but a brief enjoyment of the *otium cum dignitate* in Europe for a few months, I remained in England only a few weeks; and then, in obedience to orders, took my passage for what has been called by one, who has himself fulfilled his own saying, "The White Man's Grave." I cabined

myself, accordingly, in a dirty, heavy timber-vessel, called the Soundraporvy, in the month of August, being the only passenger; but cheered by the hope, that, whatever might befall me, my experience—which, by the by, had been dearly bought—of the mode of thinking and feeling among the negro population and black troops (to whom I had been schoolmaster and chaplain), as well as their general habits and character, would fit me, in some degree, for the difficult work I had volunteered.

Oh, how well do I remember the last evening which I passed in England at that time!

“Ah! why look back, though all is left behind?”

True, the bitterness of parting with my family was over—my last token of love to them was a kiss impressed on the innocent brow of my sleeping and unconscious infant, whom I should have deemed it an act of selfishness to have allowed even the tear that was gathering in my eye to awake. I had, too, passed through the heart-trying ordeal of bidding adieu to a few old and long-endearred friends. But my patience had yet to be tried before I fairly started.

It was not until the time for passing the luggage was “up” that I gained the London Docks, where the vessel was anchored in the Basin.

After considerable delay, and "much ado about nothing," on the part of the porter, in suffering my "traps" to be moved forward with me, I succeeded in overweighing his scruples by simply telling him that, with or without them I must go ; but as they contained Government documents which must be delivered by myself to the proper authorities on my landing, he might do as he pleased. So saying, I moved forwards ; my punctilious friend yielded, either moved by my stoical indifference, or judging there was no chance of a crown, which I was too old a traveller to be fool enough to give him. "Tricks upon travellers" in dock, are not a novelty ; but every one does not know this. At last, I was on board the craft which was soon to bear me far away ; and no situation could be much more deplorable than mine, that night. Only one miserable creature was on deck ; cook, or mate, or what he was, I knew not. Nothing could be procured to eat or drink : but I was both hungry and thirsty, for I had been about all day. Everything was in disorder ; it was a perfect picture of confusion ; and my berth was filthy, and full of rubbish. In vain I tried, like a sound philosopher, to reconcile myself to my lot by walking, as well as I could, about the deck, then down into the cabin, then into my dormitory, then counting the minutes, ticking on to the hour when the captain

was to make his appearance. At last, I threw myself on my mattress, and had just fidgeted myself into a half-sleep, when the master of the vessel made his appearance. He bore about him all the characteristics of a good-natured, burly seaman, sadly alive to the possibility of getting an African fever, should he succeed in taking us into port. But I was glad of his company. Loneliness, under circumstances such as I was placed in, was too trying ; and, as my appetite had been for some time very uneasy, I readily accepted what he ferreted out for a supper. Having done ample justice to the homely fare, I betook myself to my berth, and did not open my eyes until we were out of the basin the next morning. Then I was started on deck by the clanking of chains and hollowing of sailors, to see several handkerchiefs waving to us, as we quietly slipped through the flood-gates into the bed of the river, down whose stream a gentle yet favouring breeze took us soon into the Downs.

CHAPTER II.

VIEW OF THE ENGLISH COAST DOWN CHANNEL. — PEAK OF TENERIFFE. — CAPE BLANCO, AND BEAUTIFUL PHOSPHORIC APPEARANCE OF THE SEA.—A CALM AND ITS DISAGREEABLES. —LAND VISIBLE.—BULLOM SHORE AND CAPE.—THE CARPENTER ROCKS.—DANGER AND FOLLY OF NOT EMPLOYING PILOTS. —FIRST INTERESTING VIEW OF FREE-TOWN, SIERRA LEONE. — PAST DANGERS AND TROUBLES. — PLEASURE OF ARRIVAL, AND APPEARANCE OF THE HARBOUR.—THE LANDING-PLACE ; ITS ANIMATED SCENE. — FISHERS. — LOWER COMMISSARIAT STORE, AND BUSTLING LIFE ON THE WHARF.—MEETINGS AND GREETINGS ON BOARD.—LANDING AND FIRST ACQUAINTANCES.

THE passage was a dull and unvarying scene of little more than sea and sky. We were favoured with a beautiful, but transient view of the English coast, rich in all its variety of hill and dale, of woodland and pasture. And as it was harvest-time, the fields derived additional interest from the sheaves of corn, which studded them in pleasing regularity — the golden promise of many an anxious month and hard day's toil ! Soon we found ourselves on the wilderness of waters ; and, excepting a distant sight of the Salvage Islands, saw nothing of interest but the Peak of Teneriffe.

The sight of this magnificent mountain, however, most amply repaid us for the want of other objects of attraction. Nothing could be more imposing in effect. Although distant from us—quite as far as twelve or fourteen miles—it opened upon us from within its cloudy mantling with all the grandeur and yet beauty which immortalize it. And, then, it was set off by the brilliancy of a morning sun, and the exquisite colouring of a light, blue, unclouded sky. The weather was very fine, so we were able to coast near the land, and thus had an opportunity of seeing this wonder of the natural world, with all its diversified and highly picturesque objects, to the greatest advantage. The churches and houses, intersected by the lovely vineyards and verdant slopes, were distinctly visible; and the continual variations of light and shade, caused by the alternations of the clouds, passing across and repassing the Peak in quick succession, threw around the whole a charm which no description can realize.

After losing sight of this noble mountain and its localities, we obtained an indistinct view of Cape Blanco; but it was scarcely visible, owing to a thick haze which enveloped it. In a day or two Cape Verde rose above the waters.

It was at this progress of our passage that I beheld the waves illumined to a very high degree by

the phosphoric light. The night was unusually dark, and the waves were high and broken. As far as the eye could see around us, the mighty waters were like one rolling mass of liquid fire.

And now it was that the outline of the Western Coast began to show itself. Novelty gives to objects, for the most part, in themselves of trifling character, a power of attraction and interest which they would not otherwise possess; but my curiosity was far from being increased by the first opportunity of gratifying it. It was a mere outline of the country I saw, nothing more than a long, narrow extremity of the main land, jutting out into the sea, and presenting but a few scattered palms and dwarf trees, with some low bush. Nor were we in a position very favourable to the enjoyment of that pleasure which fresh scenes generally produce in the mind. For, fixed as though at anchor, by one of those calms so common off the shore in these seas, the vessel rested on the still and almost motionless waters with just enough of action to let us know our passage was not over. The misery of such a situation no one can form an idea of who has not himself been in a like dilemma. The sails of the ship were lazily, yet restlessly flapping backwards and forwards; the pitch was oozing out of the seams of the deck; and we were all panting and gasping like fish out

of water. The sea was remarkably clear and bright, and showed beneath its glassy surface objects at a depth scarcely credible. It was my misfortune to be without a fellow-traveller: so that I was in a great measure left to my own resources to wile away the tedious hours. The captain, poor fellow, was evidently too much engaged in his own melancholy apprehensions of fevers and salivations, although an old voyager in these parts, to be communicative or amusing. His bacchanalian mate was quite as useless—his continual occupation and delight appearing to be how he might most effectually anticipate what the master so much dreaded by his strong and repeated potations. Fortunately, a light breeze springing up in our favour, our spirits freshened with the wind; and the captain himself seemed to forget for a while his fears, in the anticipation of soon reaching his destination.

The appearance of the land, as we continued to make way, now became gradually more marked and diversified; it disclosed elevations with their levels, and some high and richly wooded country in the back ground. As we gained upon it, bold and spirited irregularities became prominent, until the Binanas, the health-spot of Sierra Leone, the Bullom shore and Cape, soon gave promise that before long, unless beset again by a calm, no un-

usual disappointment, we should be free from the dangers of the sea, whatever we might have to encounter in those on land.

But the Carpenter Rocks are visible! The breakers are dashing wildly and ominously over them!—How they roar and pounce in fearful sport over and over, forming broken and foamy ridges, until they die away on the shore! Let the mariner look out well for these; for right up to them the water is treacherously deep. Ordinary care and prudence will preserve him from wrecking his vessel; but the knowledge of impending danger does not always make men the more cautious, as in this instance.

Notwithstanding experience has taught persons the absolute need there is of the greatest precaution in approaching the harbour of Free-town, an illiberal disposition and ill-judged thriftiness, or, what is still worse, a culpable fool-hardiness, has in more than a single instance, induced some to risk life and property, solely because they would evade putting a trifle into the pockets of the pilots, who well deserve their hard earnings.

The appearance of Sierra Leone and Free-town, which may appropriately be called its metropolis, strikes any one very forcibly by its novel style of scenery as he enters the harbour. He sees a real panorama of a singular, yet beautiful kind, pos-

sessing a character, as I have heard many experienced travellers observe, which is scarcely to be met with elsewhere. It was about five P.M., when, to my satisfaction, I heard the anchor drop into the water; and never did any human creature, I believe, experience more heart-felt relief than I did at the sound; for no agreeable prospect had been before me the whole passage. What with the melancholy of the captain, and the half kind of torpidity which affected the mate, from his continual potations, besides the smoking to which the latter was equally given, I had some ground for apprehension when I recollected that the Soundraporvy was laden with an undue proportion of gunpowder, not very carefully stowed away.

But these disagreeable feelings yielded to others of a more pleasing nature, when I found that our passage was ended. I was charmed with the first sight of the colony. The harbour was well filled with vessels of every description, men-of-war, merchant ships, steamers, small craft, canoes; flags of many nationalities, and slavers condemned or only waiting for adjudication.

Free-town, which is built on a line with, and extends down to the beach, appeared to great advantage from the spot where we were moored. The landing-place, which you ascend by a flight of ten or twelve steps, was full of animation and

bustle. Here all the important business of landing goods, receiving passengers, and conducting the numerous minutiae of colonial matters is transacted. Here goods are searched, and duties determined for the Custom; soldiers and sailors, merchants and clerks, half-dressed Kroomen and unclothed children, chattering women and wrangling boatmen, throng this rendezvous of humanity. An unsightly mass of rock-stones piled one on the other, at a little distance from the land in the form of a curve, serves as a breakwater. On the top of these were seated several lanky-legged, tall, native children, uncovered, yet indifferent to the oven-heat of their hard seats, and idly fishing for a dinner, or to get some halfpence, which are better known to them by the name of "coppers."

When on the landing-place, you see before you a large and lofty building, which is the Quarters of the junior officers of the commissariat: the lower part and first story contain the stores; the upper apartments, like most of the other buildings in their construction, form the central rooms. These are dull and dreary enough, and are generally used as sleeping-rooms; but a lengthy and spacious piazza surrounds them; and this is unquestionably the only agreeable and habitable place fit for a rational being to occupy. From this there is a fine commanding view of the har-

bour and the sea. It has been pronounced unhealthy ; but why, it is perhaps difficult to say. I am rather inclined to think that it has been coveted for a colonial purpose, and for that reason has been declared to be unfit for occupation ; I can only say, I wish I had quarters half as good. As seen from on board a vessel in the harbour, this part of the town is an imposing object of curiosity and interest. Besides that it is the nucleus of persons of all characters, and every colour, as well as of all kinds of occupation, from the idle, cigar-smoking, store-house clerk, who has more impudence than manners, and less honesty, frequently, than good sense, to the third-rate gossiping official who deems himself on a par with the formidable pair of epaulettes and the cocked-hat ; it is also, the starting-place for boats and canoes, which are always to be seen pushing off with emulous rivalry, the moment a vessel is signalized. It is then, whether you are initiated or not in the knowledge of the place, or stranger to, and unfamiliar with the colony and colonists, that you experience the workings of a strong excitement on your feelings. As the faces from the boats and canoes appear, one by one, quickly on deck the "palaver" increases, or, as the African would say, "gets bigger and bigger." Unhappily for me it was my introduction to that land of death ; and I had, accordingly, the dissatisfaction of undergoing, like others

before me, as strict an inquisition from the scrutinizing eye of these visitors as any traveller could well wish to undergo. Then there were such grimaces and greetings, such shaking of hands and patting of shoulders; such a mixture of black and yellow, as well as white countenances! The mode and language of salutation were exceedingly laughable: "Ah, daddie!" "Well, old fellow!" "Glad to see 'e back again!" "Eh, massa, you do me for good, too much, you come here." These and the like original expressions of welcome might be heard, according to the circumstances of the case. From all this one is heartily glad to be relieved; for it is only the prelude to other similar grievances; but I was fortunate so far, that I was soon extricated from this strange scene. The acceptable rites of hospitality were soon offered me by a gentleman, and with him I made my escape from the vessel for the shore, on which I once more placed my foot with unspeakable satisfaction. I ascended with my new acquaintance the formidable steps which lead from the wharf to the main street of the town, more lightly than I ever did afterwards. In a short time, having performed the refreshing duties of the toilette, I found myself seated at the well-furnished table of an English merchant, and in company with three worthy officials, all of them hardy-looking Scotchmen, with whom a good understanding was soon established.

CHAPTER III.

FIRST NIGHT ON SHORE.—MORNING BEVERAGE.—COOLNESS OF THE AIR.—DELIGHTFUL SITUATION OF MY FIRST ABODE.—THE PARADE GROUND AND FORT.—UNPROTECTED AND DANGEROUS STATE OF THE PARADE GROUND.—APPEARANCE OF THIS SPOT AT THIS EARLY HOUR.—CHARACTER OF MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN; THEIR DRESS, OCCUPATION, AND ARTICLES OF SALE.—GREEGrees, OR CHARMS.—WOMEN, AND THEIR CURIOUS METHOD OF CARRYING, OR TOTTING, SUCH THINGS AS BOTTLES AND BASINS ON THEIR HEADS.—THEIR SINGULAR AND UNNATURAL USE OF THE HAND.—PARTIALITY OF THE MEN FOR GUNS AND WEAPONS.—A GROUP OF NATIVES AT EASE.—BREAKFAST.—THE PIAZZA; THE IDLE HOUR, AND EVIL OF THE “OPEN HOUSE” SYSTEM.

THE kind care of my host had provided me with a most comfortable apartment for the night, to which I gladly retired, well pleased with my new friends, but little inclined to sleep. The close of a passage is too exciting in its incidents to allow of much repose on first landing. There is too much confusion, bustle, and strangeness about what you see and hear, to get rest. You are pretty much like a whirligig, or some unfortunate insect, which has been thrown into the

midst of a variety of eddies and currents, which irresistibly send it round and round, until you yourself become giddy at watching it, and your attention is over-strained, your senses too rapidly and powerfully acted upon to calm down soon, or easily, into quiet. You may contentedly lay your head on your pillow, and resolutely shut your eyes, and patiently count over again and again your fingers to induce sleep, but it is of no use. You have left the vessel and are no longer on the heaving waters; but the motion follows you to your bed, and you are rolling backwards and forwards, up and down, in spite of yourself. Charming sensation! From this state of half sleep, half wakefulness, I could not have been many hours relieved, when my slumbers were disturbed by a voice softly whispering to me, and the touch of a hand pressing me to get up. It was my host's servant, with a head of hair as curly as wool and a face as black as ever Nature painted a son of Africa. He came according to custom, and a delightful one it is in tropical climes, to offer me a cup of coffee. In the tropics you must rise early if you would preserve your health and enjoy the most invigorating, indeed, the only invigorating part of the day. The indulgence of the above kind is, therefore, indispensable, before you take to your horse or your counter; for, until about ten

o'clock, at which hour people breakfast in Sierra Leone, they either ride or employ themselves at their stores.

The day had now dawned ; the sun was as yet scarcely risen above the horizon. Notwithstanding a feeling of fatigue still upon me, I could not resist the refreshing coolness which tempted me to the Piazza. I threw open the windows and Jalousies of the casement, and began to explore the place to which Providence had directed me.

The house of my host stood on what is called the Parade Ground, a large open green, which fronts and borders, perpendicularly, upon the beach. It is surrounded nearly on all sides by the buildings of the place, and is at all times an important thoroughfare from all parts of the town and country. It is connected with the principal street, called Water Street, which runs parallel with the beach. It is the prettiest spot in the whole town for a residence, and reminded me of the English village green. It is, moreover, central, and the very place where there ought to be a residence for the chaplain, who has none—a circumstance which, as it is well known to every one in Sierra Leone, subjects the individual filling the office to many disagreeable contingencies. In my own case it was the cause of much after-annoyance and numerous difficulties, which time and perseverance only

could remove. There was something, as I have just remarked, which partook of the character of the old English common in this spot. Cattle of various kinds and size were grazing on its surface, verdant from the late rains, which had not yet ceased to fall. There was to be seen the small, but compactly-built, native ox; the fleecless sheep; the ill-looking, long, shanky pig, and numerous goats, with poultry, native and English, dispersed over it. A small battery, mounted with a few pieces of cannon, stands on the edge of this green, which, as I have said, overhangs the beach. This fortification commands the harbour, and, whilst it protects the shipping, overawes the Bulom shore, which lies opposite, over the water a few miles. The rest of this green is open to the sea, until it joins the other part of the town. This green is a favourite resort for children; and here too the militia are paraded and inspected. On such occasions there is always a respectable display of horsemen and horses, and much going on that is amusing. It is only a wonder that the coroner's services are not more frequently in requisition, for no precautions whatever have been taken to prevent accidents, which the partiality of some good people for their cups, and the uneasy seat of others on their horses, not to mention such casualties as the bolting and running away of

these animals, and mistaking the path on a dark night, at all times expose those to, who are in the habit of frequenting this spot. A Lambert's leap there would be no enviable performance. But, at the time I speak of, more immediate objects, such as were passing and repassing, fixed my attention. At the early hour of rising in Sierra Leone the Parade Ground is a scene of busy and amusing life. The most grotesque variety of character was to be seen going to or returning from the Market Place, which, together with the Colonial Church, St. George's, the Custom House and Gaol, are situated at the further extremity of Water Street. From the adjacent villages, the outskirts of the town and more distant neighbourhood, were pouring forth the human species of all ages, sizes, and description. The tiny and naked "Pickaninnee," with his ill-proportioned stomach, his head and little legs, strangely contrasted with the tall, thin Mandingo, whose dress is nothing better than the slovenly covering of some dirty linen in the shape of a surplice, with a short under-garment, which generally disappears at the knees. Some of them wore long trowsers, but appeared to walk very awkwardly and uncomfortably in them. Extremes of wretchedness and extravagance mark the style of dress of many of these people. The fantastic finery and aping

"English fashion" are opposed to a coarse simplicity, which the sable dames of the coast, according to taste, sometimes prefer. The able-bodied Krooman, with his large ivory or bone rings round his wrists or ankles, displaying his broad, sinewy and glossy back shining in the sun, was rolling along (a pipe in his mouth) a huge cask ; or bearing aloft on his head or sturdy shoulders a weight, which half a dozen of his less powerful brethren would have groaned in attempting to move.

The Ioloff, another African tribe, with his greasy hair, dropping in thickly plaited ringlets over his shoulders, was dragging a sheep, or goat, or heifer, after the old and vulgar saying of "pull baker, pull devil." Bows and arrows, spears, swords and their cases, all of native workmanship, with less formidable articles of sale, such as table mats, baskets, reticules, pouches, and powder-horns, all beautifully and admirably wrought by native ingenuity and industry, were amongst the marketable commodities which these people were taking to sell for tobacco, Bath, guns, handkerchiefs, and similar goods. Greegrees, or charms, consisting of parts of the Koran, which they copy and transcribe very beautifully and accurately, and enclosed in cases of leather of different sizes, variously ornamented, are not only much used by themselves, but convertible into specie.

The women were by far the most numerous of those I saw, and much more noisy. A stranger to their habits and customs can form no adequate idea of the loudness and rapidity with which they speak, and the violent action with which every word is accompanied. They are, however, more active than the men, more laborious, and showed singular cleverness and strength in the method which they employed in carrying such a variety; and the strength they exhibited in bearing so large a weight of goods. For example, imagine a large basket which they call a "Blie," of a circular form, filled to the topmost with some article: as Guinea corn, pepper, or rice; two pickaninnies, one in each hand; or if these useful members are otherwise engaged, one or more of these little animals carried behind on their backs, after the plan of gipsies in this country. A large cloth, tied over the shoulders round the waist, and sufficiently loose in the rear to allow of a burden put into it, constitutes the child's berth; where, notwithstanding the continual motion and noise, and sundry interruptions to its peacefulness, it sleeps as sound and unconsciously as Shakspeare's boy upon the giddy mast. It was both curious and interesting to observe the perfect ease with which they balanced, or totted, on their heads or in their hands, such things as bottles, basins, plates, and the like.

These articles are generally filled with palm oil, palm wine, pepper, and often oysters, shelled ready for sale. These eatables are cheap enough, as you may get a pint basin of them for three pence; or, to speak in the vernacular, for six coppers; they are, also, tolerably well flavoured, although by no means equal to our oysters. When the women carry anything upon their heads they use a kind of tray: sometimes only a small round cloth twisted. On the former they will carry four or five bottles; and although occupied at the same time with their young children, and walking at a quick pace, they will carry them most securely, seldom meeting with an accident. But woe be unto you if you upset them in their course, particularly if the palm oil be spilt; for you will not get off so easily as you might suppose, by paying them the value of the article: whatever be their reason for it I cannot explain, but they will not consider themselves fully recompensed unless they grumble at you a little for your awkwardness. When the women carry anything in their hands they hold them quite differently to what any one else would do, by turning the palm of the hand uppermost, and placing the article, whatever it may be, upon it: this mode appears easy and natural to them.

I have already spoken slightly about the dress

of the men ; European custom, in this particular, is the general standard adopted ; but where native peculiarities prevail, either a kind of small frock and under garment ; or, as I have said, the dress resembling the surplice ; and this last when made, as it often is, of nice linen and clean, sets off to advantage the native when of good face and figure. The men are, also, very partial to the use of weapons, as parts of dress, such as swords, guns, and spears, with which they constantly move about. The gun is, with most of them, both by way of ornament and utility, a most indispensable appendage of importance. Greegrees, or Charms, are patronized alike by men and women ; nor are children considered as properly furnished with the means of preservation from evil, or capabilities of receiving good, without one or more tit-bits of the Koran or some other charm.

Close adjoining the house where I was stopping, and at the end of the garden, which was paled off from the green, were two lofty and noble cotton-trees, whose thick leaves afforded a welcome shade. Here on mats spread on the grass, reclined twenty or thirty men, women, and children, with their different articles of sale or exchange. Some of the women were disposing, with much apparent care, their head-dress, which consisted of a handkerchief of cotton, of some striking colour, which

they tie round the head, after the manner of the French, but not so tastily: others were busily occupied in combing and cleaning each other's hair, which, short as it is, they consider deserving their best attention, and not, perhaps, without cause.

From the contemplation of what I have been so imperfectly describing, I was now summoned by the announcement of breakfast. It was ten o'clock, and all things were in readiness. Good taste would require of me, I am aware, as a common principle, to pass over the particulars of table matters; but an exception to the general rule in these sketches will, I hope, be tolerated. Beefsteaks, mutton-chops, curry, and similar substantials and seasoned dishes, supply the first repast of the day; these are improved by the famous bitter ale, in place of tea and coffee, which comes last in the bill of fare at Sierra Leone; and, indeed, the appetite, when you are in good health, requires something more than the ordinary and delicate fare of the English table, to meet the effects of a sharp ride or busy occupation of the store, to which you may have devoted time before breakfast. Fish, which is very abundant and cheap in Free-town, is introduced at breakfast; and rice is a supplement, without which all else would be thought little of there,

particularly by the natives ; a cup of tea or coffee and a cigar, finish this business, with a lounge up and down the piazza for an hour. But this one—this short hour, is a time of considerable importance in Free-town. The conversational, that is, the idle talk commences ; and, if it be only idle, it is well. The arrival or departure of a vessel, —what passengers, — their number, calling, and qualities, pedigree, birth-place, are subjects of anxious inquiry. Nor are such questions as the following considered uninteresting : whether English potatoes, English poultry, English hams, English cheese, in short, any thing good in the shape of English, have been spared for the benefit of the poor Free-town's folk.

The prospect of an official vacancy through suspension, dismissal, or death,—and all the little sayings and doings of the preceding evening, with plans and proposals for contriving how to make the time pass quickly and pleasantly after four o'clock, the hour when business ceases, are also among the topics of discourse during this solitary one hour ! That all this must and does produce serious evils to the peace and harmony of every community, but especially small societies, such as is to be met with in places like Free-town, is too evident ; the only way to remove them is to give up the practice—almost universally, but most

foolishly tolerated—of keeping what is, in common parlance, called, “open house,” and allowing an unregulated admission of idle visitors not only at the time I am now speaking of, but at all hours of the day.

But more of men and manners as we proceed in our sketches. Whilst my host was absent at his store, I remembered that I had a duty to perform which my late arrival the night before precluded me from fulfilling: it was to report myself, officially, to the Governor, which I prepared to do accordingly, without further delay.

CHAPTER IV.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE.—MONEY EXPENDED ON IT.—APPROACH TO IT; INTERIOR.—FINE PROSPECT FROM THE PIAZZA.—INTRODUCTORY INTERVIEW WITH MR. FERGUSSON, THE GOVERNOR, AND REMARKS ON APPOINTMENTS.—CAREER AND RISE OF MR. FERGUSSON TO THE GOVERNORSHIP.—ANECDOTE OF HIM.—FIRST SPECIMEN OF A LONG RESIDENCE IN SIERRA LEONE.

IN making my way to the residence of the Governor I expected to find him housed in quarters becoming the rank and dignity of the chief magistrate of a British colony; but I was sadly disappointed; a more unaristocratic looking edifice, and, as I soon after also perceived, a more incommodious house, could not very well have been selected. Everything has been done, I believe, which could be done by art and expense, to render it respectable in its external appearance, and comfortable and convenient within; but it has been only labour and money thrown away. What has been expended in repairs and alterations would have gone very far to erect an excellent Government House. The only thing which can

be said in its favour is its situation. This is, without a question as good, I should say, as almost any in the place, and well chosen in respect to its locality for the transaction of public business. In all other particulars it is, to look upon, a heavy unmeaning mass of rock, assuming the appearance of an ill-constructed fort. Nor would it deserve this military appellation, were it not for a battery of cannon, which, pointing seaward, and overlooking the Town, gives it an assumed air of importance. Two lions, by whom chiselled it would be difficult to say, are placed over the two pillars of one of the Entrance gates. The royal standard of our glorious and beloved Queen, when it is seen expanded in the breeze, is the only proof, but it is the best proof to an English eye and English heart, that the Governor dwells there. A good carriage-road runs through the ground fronting the house. This space before the building is not large, and enclosed in a half circle by a low wall. The taste and attention of the present Governor have done much to improve it. It is, nevertheless, very greatly to be regretted, that so much money has been lavished away upon it; for to use a homely English expression — “there is nothing to show for the money.” This money may, as most persons know in the colony, be said with

strictest truth to have gone into the pockets of the workmen; but, certainly, not into the work itself. The numerous calls for improvement, and the low state of the colonial chest will, no doubt, teach the necessity of expending no further cash on a rock, which every one knows, who has once seen the Government House of Sierra Leone, is incapable of being fashioned into anything decent.

However, to the visit I was about officially to pay the Governor. A short and pleasant walk from the town of a few minutes brought me to Government House, which is situated between it and the Barracks. The latter is not only a showy, but commodious range of building, and erected on much higher ground. The principal entrance to, and interior of, the Government House is little better than the exterior. A portico receives you. From this you pass at once through a damp, narrow, prison-looking passage of rock into a small stone hall, and you find yourself at the foot of the stairs, which lead you direct from a little landing-place into the dining-room. This opens into the piazza, which is the best part of the house, and extends the whole length of it. From this you can command an extensive and uninterrupted view of the whole town; the harbour the

Bullom shore; the luxuriously green and thickly populated valley, covered with alternate houses, huts, chapels, and gardens. Beyond, you may see the noble and circular sweep of lofty hills rising one above another in undulating variety in the background. The accommodation of Government House, so far as relates to rooms, and the means of receiving government officers, and entertaining the different departments, is as miserable as it can be.

Mr. Fergusson, the Governor at that time, received me with ease and urbanity. His manners were perfectly unaffected; a rare exception to the general bearing of Africans and coloured people, when raised over their European neighbours; and in carriage and conversation he was gentlemanly. He said, and did everything without vanity or pride; a feature in his public character which is rarely to be met with in those who have rule in small colonies. In figure, Mr. Fergusson was tall and well made; of an intelligent and amiable expression; and the manly bearing, inseparable from, and belonging to, those only who have followed for years the military profession, gave to his whole appearance the stamp of a superior man. It is not considered the best or wisest policy by those who, from local and practical experience, and not mere hearsay

are entitled to some credit for their opinions and judgments in these things, to place either Africans, or men of colour over Englishmen in any department; when, amongst the latter men can be found equal in ability and integrity to discharge public duties. There is a very great rage, however, for this kind of preference of black over white; but loud as the cry of philanthropists and humanists may be in its favour, I crave permission to observe, that positive and personal experience in such matters is, at least, equal in credit to the speeches, eloquent as they may be, and over-abounding in zeal for the elevation of our species. "Softly, softly," is a pertinent axiom of the black man, when he would imply his opinion that some one was undertaking and carrying on any work too unadvisedly and inconsiderately; and, in Sierra Leone it may be seen verified, in the marked preference shown to the African over the Englishman in the filling up of appointments, and the disagreeable results of such distinctions.

To Mr. Fergusson's credit, however, and the honour of his memory it is but just to remark what will be granted by the majority; that as a public functionary in the high position he held, he has never been surpassed, probably not equalled. He had his faults and failings,—who

has not? He was not proof against those errors of understanding which wiser men than himself are often falling into; but then he was not exempt from those difficulties which public situations such as he filled, and in such a place, invariably present to thwart the best intentions, confound the ablest judgment, and defy the keenest foresight to anticipate. Let it be sufficient now to say of him, for he is no more, and his memory deserves the tribute, that he rose to the eminence he attained from the rank of assistant-surgeon in one of the native regiments through the usual gradations of office, which he filled with satisfaction to his employers; so that it was not the push of an influential friend behind the scenes which forced him upon the stage of life, so prominent a character, but his own industry, good common sense, perseverance, and deserts. It may not be out of place to mention a little anecdote about him, and which has some reference to myself. The circumstance took place soon after my arrival in the colony. Custom has made it a matter of more than courtesy to preface any personal address to the chief magistrate of small colonies with a title equal to that bestowed on the Governor-General of India, or Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. Some are weak enough to exact it, from mere conceit, as matter of right,

as if the omission incurred the pains and penalties of rebellion. However, desirous, as far as I was individually concerned, to render "honour to whom honour was due," I addressed Mr. Fergusson as "His Excellency." Touching me good-naturedly on the shoulder, and calling me aside whilst a pleasing smile of amiable humility lit up his countenance,—“Mr. Poole,” he said, “you will oblige me by not calling me ‘His Excellency.’ There is no occasion for it, I have lived here many years, and am better known as Mr. Fergusson. Drop it, if you please! I suppose you have been accustomed, however, to a good deal of that kind of thing?”

But to finish with the account of my first visit to Government House, which was a short one and terminated with a question of business soon answered. “I suppose,” continued the Governor, “you are ready to enter upon your work next Sunday;” it was only Thursday when I landed. I bowed assent. He turned for a moment to a third person, who sat in profound silence on the sofa, and had neither risen from his seat, nor spoken, nor so much as smiled from the moment that I entered the apartment. “What say you, Mr. —,” resumed the chief speaker; in a voice scarcely audible, and with a faint smile he signified acquiescence. To this sedate

being I had been formally introduced, but could not catch the name; the recognition on his part was formal enough, and I slightly saluted. The direct purpose of my visit to the Governor had called my attention altogether from this personage. The turn of the conversation induced me to honour him with a more inquisitive examination. He had seen the best years of his life, for age had whitened, not silvered his hair, which sparingly covered his head; and his cheek was furrowed. Climate as well as time had, no doubt, done its part in perfecting this living picture of one of Sierra Leone's sickly children. "This gentleman," added the Governor, "has been out on the coast many years." There could not be a question about the truth of it. We gravely bowed to each other. At a loss, really, whether I should most pity this doleful apology for a man, or fear for myself, from the practical lesson before me, as to future fevers, agues, salivations, and rheumatics, I gave this acclimatized gentleman a wistful look, and taking my leave of Mr. Fergusson, gladly retraced my steps to my cheerful abode on the Parade Ground, to ruminate over this introductory glimpse of place and character in Free-town.

CHAPTER V.

CHAPLAINCY DUTIES.—OBSTACLES TO USEFULNESS.—FIRST VISIT TO THE GAOL.—INTERIOR OF THE PRISON YARD.—GENERAL APPEARANCE OF PRISONERS.—PRISON BUILDING.—WANT OF ORDER AND DISCIPLINE.—FEMALE PRISONERS.—ANECDOTE ILLUSTRATING FEMALE CHARACTER OF NATIVES.—THE POLICE AND THEIR INEFFICIENCY.—GAOL OFFICERS, AND REMARKS ON THEIR EFFICIENCY FOR THEIR DUTIES.—BEHAVIOUR OF PRISONERS AT DIVINE SERVICE.

I soon found out that the appointment which I held was no sinecure, if its duties were discharged as they ought to be ; and that the least satisfactory and by no means irresponsible part of my office was to visit the gaol. Not to say anything of the physical difficulty of properly discharging three distinct services, the mental anxiety to which a man is thus also subject through the numerous obstacles which oppose themselves to his best intentions and exertions, and in such an oppressive climate as that of Sierra Leone, must render his labours almost abortive. This remark may not be peculiar to Free-town alone, but it is not the less correct so far as it is applicable to this

place. If so fortunate as to escape the vexations of contending with stubbornness, ignorance, and prejudice, you will, nevertheless, find your path of duty crossed by some paltry act of selfishness, some uncalled-for interference, or ill-timed interruption.

To attempt the correction of evils, however glaring and injurious, or to be supposed to so much as to see the abuses of office, which long sanction appears to have given a kind of prescriptive right of exemption from remark or investigation, is tantamount to a kind of petty treason. In doing so, you for the most part spend your labour for nought; unless, thereby, you can administer to the caprices of those whom you must consult, and fall in exactly with their minds and ideas. Then people here have such views and ideas! *Experientia est veritas!* and I soon painfully learnt this truism in the little congeniality of sentiment I shared amongst those who could have greatly assisted me in my labours. Indeed, I can affirm as a truth, that during nearly ten years of the most varied and trying colonial occupations, I have never met with such bigoted indifference and opposition, such instances of narrow-mindedness, as in Free-town often set themselves in array against the most laudable and just attempts to promote the cause of morality and religion! But to the prison.

In volunteering as chaplain to the Western coast of Africa, I did not, certainly anticipate such a disagreeable share of ministerial work; and am constrained to say that, united as the duties are at present, of the colonial church, the gaol, and the garrison, which last includes the military hospital and superintendence of the garrison schools, no single individual can duly discharge them. However, I had passed the Rubicon, and there was no retreating. Accordingly, to the Gaol I went; and never shall I forget my impressions on my first visit to it. Of all clerical ministrations, those at a prison are, perhaps, the most unsatisfactory and discouraging, whether the nature of the duties, or the results of them, be considered. What can be more distressing than the uncertainty and difficulty of arriving at any conclusive convictions, particularly in extreme cases, of the genuineness of criminal repentance, when the law is left to take its last awful course! In the visitations of gaols belonging to such places as Freetown, whose miserable inmates comprehend chiefly persons of colour, or natives, and these of the worst description, nothing short of an inward consciousness that in purpose and effort you are doing what is in your power to fulfil your obligations, can uphold one in such a work.

On nearing the prison, I was prepared for what

I had to encounter within its walls by the tumult which I heard. I entered a small, low-pitched door, on a line with, and a few paces from, the great gates of the gaol. Close adjoining this is a sentry-box and a sentry; who, taking every one for an official, salutes, as a soldier ought to do, but asks no questions as to what business, or by what authority you appear in so suspicious a looking place. The prison-yard is spacious, and enclosed by a high wall. It is covered with a yellow daub as is the ill-built and worse-shaped edifice, the gaol-house. On the right side, as you enter, is a low and long range of room, a ground floor occupied by some of the prisoners. At the end of it was a well, cook-house, wood shed, and the burying-place of the murderer who has paid, and justly so, the forfeit of his life for the shedding of man's blood. Alas! twice has that melancholy spot of the most guilty of the guilty been disturbed, to receive the kindred and disfigured remains of a brother felon, whilst I was in office; and as often has the earth been upturned for the same purpose, during my absence from the colony on account of ill health. So that within five years, five executions for murder have taken place. Two of the murderers were natives, the others were Spaniards. But more of them as we proceed.

The majority of the prisoners whom I met with

in the yard, presented a disgusting and bestial appearance. The sight of them was revolting to every feeling and sentiment of decency. Their wild and vacant stare, their grinning and chattering, I cannot soon forget. A few of them were decently clad, but the greater part of these miserable beings were literally in the most natural condition. But that which arrested my attention most forcibly, was the strange mixture of character and consequent contrast of the prisoners. Some were sitting cross-legged, moping over their misery, like marble statues of the same colour as themselves; they moved not, they spake not as I passed them, but remained just as I found them. It was impossible not to see disagreeably developed, the mere animal in the look of the eye and in the shape of the head. Others were sprawling at their body's length asleep on the gravel, and indifferent to a mid-day sun, which would have soon punished such exposure in others. Some of these objects of human wretchedness were horribly afflicted in their limbs, which were swollen to a large size, and full of sores from a disease called elephantiasis, which is peculiar to the natives and persons of colour. Then there was also to be seen the human form, exhibiting the most emaciated skeleton leanness. Unexpectedly, a tall, athletic, big-headed Krooman arrested

my attention—an acceptable relief. His round straw hat is cocked on one side; he walks with a swaggering air and daring impudence, the effects of a little knowledge of the worst part of the English character. And then the noise, the almost inhuman shout and yell, the wild gestures, the savage expression and fearful excitement of these terrible elements of social being! It was enough to test the nerves of a stronger-minded man than myself.

The gaol-house stands in a part of the yard which is nearest to the African slave-yard, from which it is only parted by the prison wall. It is a common-place style of building, erected, however, as most buildings are, at a wasteful expenditure of public money. It is two stories in height, and most inconveniently constructed. A flight of steps conducts you to the interior of it, which is divided by a straight and somewhat abrupt ascent of stairs directly fronting the entrance. There are two landing places. On the first floor is the gaoler's room, right and left are the cells for the prisoners. The upper or second story, with the exception of two small rooms, constitutes the court-room, where the sessions or assizes are held. It is large, but low-pitched, yet airy, from the height of the building and the blank windows with which it is well ventilated. At one of the side

entrances of the gaol-house fronting the entrance, is an apartment for the use of the complement of soldiers, whom duty requires to be ready for emergencies. But the accommodation for the prisoners is very limited ; the cells are of tolerable size, and this in such a climate humanity may always grant without lessening the effects of wholesome discipline, or the strict course of justice. This, however, is not always the case, as I found at the Gambia.

The cells are, moreover, numerically insufficient for individual confinement, and the evil of this is very serious. No distinction nor discrimination can for this reason be made in the classification of prisoners. The most reprobate and hardened are thus thrown together with offenders younger in years, and less initiated in crime. Thieves, murderers, debtors, convicted and unconvicted, are injudiciously mixed, a circumstance which must be attended with the most pernicious effects. As to that part of the prison which is appropriated to the confinement of female prisoners, it is little more than a narrow slip of the yard, merely separated by a gate of iron bars,—barely room to turn in ; and the cells which are on the ground floor are badly ventilated, and wretchedly arranged.

As to the discipline of this establishment it is most deficient, for there is no plan or system in the management of the inmates. The female

prisoners can communicate with the male, and see and speak with one another. When I first began to officiate at the prison, and for some time after, the disorderly conduct and confusion of tongues even on a Sunday were unbearable. The summons to assemble for prayers, which are read in the court-room, was invariably the signal for noise and irreverent behaviour; and sometimes I have known it disregarded altogether. On one occasion I was compelled in self-defence to have locked up a powerful Krooman, who treated us all alike with insolence and defiance, until the sentinel removed him away. This man gave himself all the airs of an injured and innocent person, and in a threatening attitude, exclaimed: "Ah! were he in England, he'd have his rights."

Another instance I offer to show how feebly the discipline of the gaol is enforced. A disturbance was heard amongst the prisoners, which on investigation turned out to be a fight between two of them, and at the moment of assembling for divine worship. The blood which covered one fellow, and the torn rags of the other, told that it had been a desperate fray. We had no little trouble to restore quiet and put down the uproar. The deputy gaoler has often declared to me that the prisoners were at times almost unmanageable, and that he did not know what they might not do,

if not under strong coercion. The governor of the prison used to say the same thing. These officers are active, attentive, and energetic, but system is wanting to make their exertions effective; for authority seems frequently a questionable thing here. Such a huddling together in fact of the vilest elements of society! Such a noise and quarrelling! Such exhibitions of the passions and feelings of savage nature amongst creatures of every tribe, and all ages, of every grade in vice and crime!

The female prisoners are few in number, compared with the male inmates of the gaol; but far exceed the latter in vice and crime, in viciousness of disposition, sullenness of temper, and particularly in the vindictiveness of their nature. Most of the "palavers" originate with the women; and in serious fracas the dark dames of Nature are generally discovered to be either the chief promoters, or to have a considerable share. If not the victims themselves, as not unfrequently happens, they are in most instances the authors of the cause which victimizes those unhappy creatures, who, through their subtle cunning and instigations, are urged to the perpetration of the darkest crimes. Nothing is more common than to hear such remarks, as, "that's a woman palaver," — "she make big palaver," when some

atrocious and out-of-the-way act has been committed. The case of poor Williams, the murderer, of whom I shall presently speak, and another which occurred in the death of a coloured woman who was stabbed in a house, not far from the commissariat, are sad illustrations of this unenviable distinction. The inclination, indeed, of the women to revenge, especially when their passions are moved, and their jealousy stirred up, which it is not difficult to effect, runs into the most fearful extremes of act and mode. Their method of taking summary punishment, in their quarrels with their masculine opponents, is as revolting as it is diabolical. There is, in fact, scarcely a redeemable quality to be traced in the character of such as compose that class of society to which I now refer, and yet they are not by any means to be enumerated amongst the lowest grades of rational being in Sierra Leone. Their ignitable nature and quickness to anger, are only surpassed by the violence with which they give vent to their feelings, and the length of time they retain and cherish the recollection and sense of the offence, be it real or fancied. On one occasion it fell to my lot to learn what it was to give umbrage to one of these daughters of the Western coast. I had located myself, unfortunately, as it afterwards turned out, but at the

time I had no choice—for good houses in respectable situations in Free-town are few and very high rented—in one of the most noisy and worst parts of it. It goes by the name of Kroo-town, and may be styled the Saint Giles's of the place. The house was commodious and airy; but the street was composed of huts, except one or two buildings of a better description, and these were chiefly occupied by persons of disreputable and irregular habits; and no sooner was the business of the day over, which is at four o'clock, than the beating of the tum-tums commenced, (the most teasing and irritating noise that can be imagined,) as well as a variety of other unheavenly sounds from numerous parts of the neighbourhood. One of these huts adjoined my premises, and with its yard was only parted off by a low temporary railing of short piles, so that I could see as well as hear all that was said and done. My neighbour was one of the bad as well as noisy sort—a perfect specimen of a black fury. Her chief occupation appeared to be washing, and her customers sailors; for all around the enclosure of her domicile, in front and in rear, right and left, clothes of all kinds, the fanciful as well as useful, but particularly Jack's habiliments, were to be seen quivering in the wind, when there was a wind to stir them; and a towering bamboo at

the doorway, far out-topping the hut, and bearing on its point a long streamer, told its inmate's vocation. For a little time we were tolerably good neighbours. But her politeness and civility inducing her to greet me more familiarly than I liked whenever I went to my window, I cruelly slighted her good manners. This mortified the lady's pride,—for pride of a certain kind these creatures have; and soon after, having occasion to remonstrate about the disorderly and improper behaviour which was continually taking place, I brought down her full vengeance upon me. There was no abuse which was too bad for me; and she appeared to believe she could never give me enough of it. I studiously avoided, for three or four days, approaching that part of my piazza which looked into this person's garden, for the purpose of escaping her compliments. It was in vain. When I thus ceased to be visible—for so long as I showed myself, she never failed of making her appearance from her hut and charging me with a roll of invective—she abated not her persecution, apostrophizing me in no agreeable terms, first to one person, then to another, if she saw any one. And if she was alone, like a dog baying the moon, she would address herself in my favour to auditors, as you might fancy from her manner, of her own excited imagination. Go to what part

of my house I would, her voice could be plainly heard. At last her violent and quarrelsome propensities, after venting themselves in some hard blows on the girls whom she had with her as assistants, took another course, and fell upon a man who was an almost constant visitor at her hut. The result was a desperate fight, and nearly loss of life. I ventured to approach her threshold and try to reason with her, but was soon driven most unceremoniously from the door. I had them summoned: something like order and quiet was restored, and to my great surprise one morning my neighbour was seen by me, hand in hand with a husband, escorted by several followers, some smartly dressed, and others scarcely dressed at all; the bridegroom, her old enemy, gay in a new hat and suit of clothes, white neckerchief; whilst the sable bride in a white dress, weighty with flounces, white silk stockings, and a white head-gear surmounted with waving feathers, presented the ugliest specimen of a black Venus you could desire to see. What with the lecture read, as I presume, to her by the police magistrate, and the care of her new protector, my neighbour's quarters from this time underwent a complete change. The quarrelling and railing were succeeded by not less noisy, but more excusable vociferations. A religious meeting of some kind

was held three or four times in the week in her hut; when what with the screaming and ejaculations and invocations of the Deity, intended it may be for the effusions of a more sobered piety, but which was almost impious in detail, I was delivered from one evil for another equally bad; and, as they keep up such occupations until midnight, any rest or sleep is out of the question. The unwillingness and perversity of some of these people in refusing to aid you in putting down any nuisance, or staying a breach of the peace, are notorious. One of my neighbours, a more decent person than the last, when summoned as witness to the palaver just related, not only refused to go, but told me to my face that she did not care for me, or magistrate, and would not give evidence to please either of us, and she signified this in no pleasant manner. I was at last obliged to seek out a new abode. Police constables were stationed in the district; but, as is generally the case, were seldom to be found when wanted, except in or near to the grog shop, or gossiping under some piazza, or in a store. A more useless body of men than this force does not exist in the colony. An effective constabulary is much wanted, but that now in service is utterly deficient in energy, zeal, and watchfulness. Notwithstanding several of these men were stationed up and

down the road, where I lived just before my return to England, during my absence for an evening at the barracks, my kitchen was robbed, and the store of a near neighbour; nor did a reward of five pounds lead to a detection of the thief. Their want of vigilance can alone account for occurrences of this kind, and explain their frequency, as well as the reason why the offenders so often escape detection. I knew a gentleman in the colony, from whom some timber had been stolen,—from off his farm. The culprit was one of his workmen, who had been dismissed for neglecting to do his work, and fulfil his contract. This fellow first summoned his master for payment for work which he never did, and was soon afterwards apprehended for stealing from his employer. The police constable found the stolen property in the premises of the thief, deliberately recognized, and said he could identify it on oath. He accordingly took the man into custody, brought the articles with him to the gentleman's yard in town, again repeated his assurance as to the identity of the property, and proceeded with his prisoner to the magistrate. What then? Safe enough, now, and in a fair way for receiving his deserts! But, "eh! daddee!"—he's off, just in sight of the house of the dispenser of justice. In taking him to the bench, the constable first lets him

escape, and afterwards, either from natural stupidity or native cunning, declares he knows nothing about the property, and cannot swear to them, and so the vagabond gets scot free. I have myself witnessed from my own house the grossest dereliction of duty on the part of these policemen in the most serious matters. Because the scene of contention may be a few yards out of their usual beat, I have known them refuse to come to render assistance and interfere in behalf of an unfortunate creature, a woman, who has been, nevertheless, bleeding from the blows received from some wretch, and screaming with pain and fright, until taught a different lesson. Whilst at Regent, a village distant a few miles from Free-town, with a friend for some days during Christmas, in a case of assault similar to this, when the offender was apprehended and surrounded with a number of people in the road close to where we were lodging, he contrived to get off. Asking permission very coolly to take off his jacket, and promising to walk quietly to where he was to be confined, he suddenly made a start, and away he went into the bush. No one — not even the constable, made the least attempt to stop him, and he has not been heard of since. But to retrace our steps to the gaol, which is under the superintendence of a gaoler and deputy, the soldiers being the only auxiliaries

they have to support them in their arduous duties. These officials are both coloured men, and do their best, I believe, to fulfil their obligations. Yet it has often struck me in my reflections on the state of things in this department, how much it would further the objects of justice, and promote the great purpose of prison discipline and punishment, if some person conversant from experience in the management and government of English prisons, and of some reputation for ability and character, were entrusted with so serious and responsible an office. For there is wanting, most assuredly at present, that secret yet powerful art of controlling and influencing the heterogeneous mass of vice and crime, I would add, of misfortune not unfrequently, unmixed with these pernicious ingredients of our corrupt nature, which for the most part compose the unhappy inmates of a gaol. Tact and management are everything; and there is a way of commanding and enforcing authority without being thought to do so. But this comes of a deeper insight into, and acquaintance with, human nature, than the old soldier who now rules over the troublesome ones in Free-town gaol possesses

From what I have remarked regarding the internal ordering of the prisoners, and their general behaviour, it might be expected, that

the services of religion, done on Sunday, would be anything but satisfactory. It is quite the reverse; and a very singular and remarkable contrast is observable on these solemn occasions. Indeed, I often think of them with mingled feelings of pain and pleasure; feelings produced by the contemplation of man in misery and crime, yet decorously, and to all appearance, joining in, and reverently following, the beautiful and scriptural liturgy of our church. Nor can I bring myself to believe that, on all occasions; and with all who have been present, it has been mere formality. No; I have, unsuspectedly, yet scrutinizingly watched my sinful congregation; and sometimes observed, with a delight inexpressible, a tear-drop stealing down the face of some poor criminal. Might not that be the bright harbinger of a better life, the gem-like promise of an awakened sense of sin, the small, but powerful token of a saving conviction of guilt? Ah! how often does the silent, solitary tear come forth from a source of such intense feeling and sentiment, as no imagination can conceive, no eloquence adequately describe.—Perhaps, too, it speaks a contrition, which can only be felt, and not uttered. The assembling of the prisoners together for worship, is, at all times, and unavoidably so, as the present state of things exist

in the gaol, a business of some trouble and confusion. The clanking of the chains, the jabbering of the culprits, the calls to order, as they ascend the stairs to the large room, necessarily cause this; but once seated and settled, all is order and propriety. A stranger would then be astonished at the manner in which the service is conducted; the correctness with which the responses are made; the alternate verses of the Psalms read; and their precise attention to the kneeling or standing, as the nature of the service requires. Often, indeed, I have heard such reading on these occasions, as would surprise, and even shame more educated persons. The duties of the day over, the prisoners retire in much the same way as they prepared for them, making a sad disturbance, which is not easily quieted; and, for my own part, I gladly finish with this last labour of my office, thankful enough to get home and throw myself on the sofa, to enjoy a little rest and relief from such trying occupations.

CHAPTER VI.

EFFECT OF CLIMATE ON THE SPIRITS, AND REMEDY IN CHANGE OF SCENE.—WILBERFORCE AND REGENT.—A CHARACTER.—SESSIONS, AND UNCEREMONIOUS WAY OF JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS.—COURT BUSINESS.—CRIMES.—PREVALENCY OF THEFT.—A REFLECTION.—MODE OF PUNISHMENT AND CHAIN GANG.—NECESSITY OF SEVERE MEASURES AGAINST STEALING.—CASES OF THEFT, AND CLEVER CROSS-EXAMINATION, BY A NATIVE, OF A WITNESS, CHARGED WITH THE OFFENCE.—BOB KREW, THE NOTORIOUS THIEF AND AFRICAN JACK KETCH.—ANECDOTES OF HIM.

THE pulse of social life, in Sierra Leone, for the most part, beats slow and languidly. The pleasures of friendly communion and charms of rational conversation are little studied or cared about. What the wretched dissensions and petty jealousies of selfishness and party spirit fail of accomplishing towards producing dulness and monotony, languor and debility, both physical and mental, are too successful in supplying. Apathy and ennui triumph powerfully over the powers of thought and action; and these enemies to exertion and energy affect all alike, prostrating, at times, the most robust and active, and affecting

him with that most disagreeable of all sensations, called by some the "fidgets," by others the "blue devils." Restless and uneasy, dissatisfied with yourself and every one, with every thing, you pace your piazza, throw yourself on the sofa, rummage your boxes, turn out your clothes, examine your books, call your fowls to an extra feed, or try to catch the distant sail of some expected vessel on the horizon; but all to no purpose; "you do not know what to do with yourself." Then is the time for change, for amusement, for excitement. Mount your horse, if you have one, and you never ought to be without, for you will find him your best friend in this miserable place; mount him, and be off to the country, no matter where, so that you can get quit of your hippishness—

"Not rural sights alone, but rural sounds
Exhilarate the spirit, and restore
The tone of languid nature."

To the Signal Hill, my friend, to the Manager's house at Wilberforce, where hospitality, and a comfortable country sofa, and a sweet pretty garden (and a breeze, if any, will be felt there), and a view of Free-town, its harbour and whereabouts—an animated picture without the annoyances of its realities—will revive and invigorate you! Or else, to Regent, a delightful, romantic ride—deep

dells, shelving ravines, and wild hills and steeps, with their slopes and valleys of Cassada and Cocoa on one side enlivening the large and numerous blocks of dark rock which lie scattered about in every direction. And when you gain that interesting little village, with its comfortable parsonage, its neat and simple church, its old angular bridge, dilapidated and arching a clear, bold, mountain-stream of rippling waters, playfully splashing over the stones, and eddying between the rocks which oppose its way, just in old English style, your ill-humours and complainings will no longer plague you. For a lodging, fail not to make the best of your way to old Thomas's quarter's: his house stands on the rise, to the left as you enter Regent, and no bad specimen of English snuggerly in an African village. Save the sideboard, which is a curiosity of itself, the furniture is chiefly English. The village pictures of the old fashion, with their gay, gilt frames, and bright-coloured subjects; the caseless timepiece with its sideling pendulum, the oaken bureau with its secret drawers, gaudy American looking-glasses, fancy tumblers, and wine-glasses enough to meet the wants of a dozen visitors; and a large, smartly-decorated bed, roomy enough to roll yourself about in, if Mosquitoes or the Tom Toms will not let you rest, only not of the softest descrip-

tion! And, your landlord, moreover, is a fine, old, cheerful, good-tempered fellow, sensible and shrewd. His short, curly hair is thickly mixed with grey, and sixty years have left their marks upon his countenance; but his eye is yet bright, and full of sprightly animation; and many a half-hour of wearisomeness have I pleasantly wiled away in listening to his entertaining stories and odd notions, which, notwithstanding all his "savez" and enlightenment, he holds concerning the monkey, particularly the Chimpanzee. He will tell you, that it is something more than it appears to be, but is too stubborn to speak; and that the power of practitioners in witchcraft to act upon you in such a manner by their secret and inexplicable tricks, is so great as to cause you some bodily or mental injury. I once visited the old man when sick, accompanied by a gentleman, and it was in vain we tried to dispossess his mind of this strange impression.

The superstition of the natives, indeed, in this respect, is extreme. They believe so strongly in the power of these witchcraft-men, as to suppose that if they place the charm in or across the road, the person intended to be victimized by it, in passing over it, will be induced to do whatever his enemy wishes, to effect his ruin. Whatever the charm be, it is supposed to cause a slow, lingering

death, or induce to theft; and that even by throwing it into the house the object will be accomplished. To give an example of this: the wife of a native fell ill; the witchcraft-man, or country doctor, was sent for, who told the husband his wife must go to his house before a cure could be effected; she did so, got better, and returned: soon after, the husband was affected, the wife also relapsing. The doctor, a witchcraft-man, came again. Hearing of their state a missionary called on them; the cure was in its process; the husband was in the parlour, the lady and her sable physician where they ought not to have been.

However, poor Thomas is a very good landlord, glad, at all times, to receive you with hearty welcomes, shaking of the hands, and laughing smiles. He will boil rice for you to perfection, roast yams, kill as tough a fowl for you as ever was placed on the table, serve everything in fashionable blue ware, and not forget to remind you, in the most good-humoured way, of any deficiency in the same, should you crack and break anything. But here he is, in Free-town, dressed in his best; hat, coat, waistcoat, walking-cane, complete! It is the time for a gaol-delivery, for Free-town has its Oyer and Terminer seasons, and friend Thomas is constable, or something of the sort.

The Sessions, or Assizes, which are held quarterly, are always periods of acceptable relief to the sameness which prevails in Free-town ; and although there are wanting to the administration of justice the usual solemnities, which properly, and with so much good effect, precede the openings of an English court of judicature, and which omission is the more to be regretted in a place, where external pomp and form go so far to give weight and importance to the proceedings of the bench ; yet it is, then, a season of animation and bustle. A certain class in society, and a very considerable portion of it too, are affected, and not without advantage, by externals, even in highly civilized countries. In half-barbarous communities such as that which is to be met with in Sierra Leone, and compounded, as it is, of the most discordant and untutored elements, those, who know anything of human nature, understand the necessity and force of such resources, when timely employed ; but there is nothing of the kind to be seen in Free-town. The Judge drives quietly into town, and takes his seat upon the bench, robe-less and wig-less ; the Sheriff wears no sword of justice ; no javelin men escort the functionary, highest next to the Governor : the church doors are not open, as in other places, at such a solemn season ; no public prayers hallow and consecrate

the Dispensers of the Law to their awful work; and no sermon is deemed necessary on a subject so deeply affecting every one, from him who holds the trembling scales of right and wrong, to the miserable being, who, fear-stricken, awaits in the dock before a multitude of his fellow-creatures the terrible sentence, which is either to doom him to the chain and scourge, or consign him to the fearful punishment of an ignominious and untimely death!

The judicial proceedings themselves are not remarkable for any thing peculiar: they are conducted on the principles of English jurisprudence, and in the usual way. One of the members of council, together with the police magistrate, sit with the judge during the trials; and the bar, which is formed of the queen's advocate, and the lawyers of the place, who are permitted to act as barristers, conduct the cases in the ordinary manner. These seldom present any features very attractive; and as eloquence and cross-examination are not greatly in repute, nor professional qualifications in which excellence is often displayed, the gaol-delivery in its court routine of business is wanting in that stirring interest which invariably invests an English court of justice.

The crimes generally prevalent and chargeable against the accused are theft, assault, and murder.

The first two of these predominate; and stealing, with every species of fraud, is practised amongst the natives on their own people as well as Europeans; indeed, if the plain truth be spoken, the spirit of honesty is, in the broad acceptation of the term, a quality in which too many of those who move in a better circle, and have not the common excuses of poverty or ordinary temptations for so offending, are deplorably deficient. And if the hand of the law were only suffered to fall as heavily upon these more educated and respectable delinquents, as it does on the humbler felon, perhaps an evil now almost intolerable would receive a salutary check; for if stringent measures are needed to deter one class of persons from the commission of such a crime, why, or on what grounds of fair dealing, should they not be put in force against every thief? Superiority of rank, or education, or situation, or mode of life, instead of being advanced, as they often are, as pleas for a change or mitigation of the common method of punishing this, or any other offence, ought to be considered the weightiest reason for abiding more strictly by the penal code, which applies to such crime. Exposed as property of every description is, however, in Sierra Leone, both in Free-town and the distant factories, the most coercive means are necessary to protect it

from the fingers of the vagabonds which abound and are ever ready, with a cunning proverbial to them, to seize every opportunity and profit by the facility, which the unavoidable exposure of goods and various local causes so readily afford. Absence or sickness are times when the petty pilferer, or more covetous plunderer, may be expected, and too much vigilance and care cannot be employed if you would hope to escape their depredations; for their skill and artifice in their nefarious calling exceed belief; and detection as well as recovery are, as I have said, extremely uncertain.

In some degree to suppress this evil practice, it has been thought advisable by the legislature to punish by flogging such as are convicted of it; and the diminution of the offence since this system has been adopted has proved that imprisonment, and even hard labour, were not sufficient to deter persons from this crime. The natives have a great dread of flagellation, which arises, I believe, more from their sense of the disgrace and odium attached to it than fear of bodily suffering, inasmuch as they lose caste by it; and I do not think I am reporting inaccurately, when I add, as a further proof of the efficacy of this punishment, that a prisoner sentenced to undergo it threw himself into a well and was drowned.

But this apprehension was not occasioned by the excessive severity of the sentence. It would be unfair not to state, that humanity and moderation are always suffered to have such a due weight in the administration of the executive, as is consistent with the ends of justice; but this kind of punishment, like every other, to be permanently salutary should not be repeated too often, where of necessity it must be frequent, otherwise it will be sure to harden rather than tend to a wholesome preventive against crime and the reformation of the sufferer. To inflict again and again such a chastisement on the same offender, cannot fail of provoking hardihood and desperate insensibility, instead of any abiding penitence and improvement of conduct; nor is it desirable that such exhibitions should be witnessed in parts of the town too public, and where the ears and eyes of individuals, certainly not requiring examples of this nature, must be pained and shocked by so disgusting a spectacle. Publicity, there can be no question, is indispensable to the ultimate end of all correction; but let that publicity be given to it, which it will not be difficult to do, without subjecting, indiscriminately, every one to so painful a sight. Nor can it be requisite for me to hint how carefully every thing should be avoided which may lead to the slightest appearance of

vindictiveness, or triumph, in the execution of the law in such cases.

One serious failure, in carrying the punishment of hard labour into effect has often occurred to me,—the disorderly behaviour and noise of the Chain-Gang, as they fulfil their prison task on the roads. The Chain-Gang consists of those prisoners who are sentenced to work without the gaol, for the public benefit. You may see a number of them passing and repassing along the way, chained together in couplets and triplets, or single, according as their character and conduct seem to warrant a greater or less degree of security. And you may hear them too, for they make a hideous noise, shouting, and that most uproariously, as they run along, trying, as though in sport, to outdo one another by a kind of rivalry, who can with most activity move along his puncheon, or drag forward his block of stone or log of timber. The disturbance they thus create is exceedingly annoying. Hard work theirs cannot be properly called, according to the European notion of it, except that it is compulsory and in fetters; and, to see them with their grinning faces, you would little credit them for being either very sensitive about shame or alive to suffering. Little disgrace, also, would appear to attach to working in the Chain-Gang, for persons are not ashamed to

recognize their friends and acquaintances in such company; and when the prisoners have served out their time, they dress themselves very gaily on the occasion, and are received and welcomed with the compliment of a feast and rejoicing.

What amused me was to watch the keepers, with their bits of whips, crying out after their charge, and jog-trotting to keep pace with them. But, see that repulsive, lowering countenance, too true an index of depraved manners and daring crime! Observe the low cunning stamped on another countenance; and the revengeful sulkiness which the features of that unintellectual being, of dwarf, but thick-set figure, display! How different the expression of others! Something redeemable in that young face! Some trace of a heart, not wholly callous! Something of sorrow and thoughtfulness depicted, which tell that Virtue has not been long or entirely abandoned, and that her paths may yet be retraced, and occupied to a future better life! It is the same, whose behaviour is so decorous at divine service, whose voice so melodiously and distinctly joins, and with such admirable emphasis, in the responses,—yet, what is he with all this?—a thief!

Strange, but impressive, this living picture of semi-barbarism, perverted instruction, and abused freedom! Shall we most pity or despise? Ra-

ther pity; and, looking into ourselves, question the possibility of our escaping so sad a lot, had we been thrown into the same vortex of temptation, and reared in the like noxious atmosphere of vice, amidst the social elements to which these poor creatures have been accustomed.

Whilst on this subject I would mention two or three instances of theft, the details of which I am acquainted with, from information on the spot. One of them relates to myself, and shows the cleverness with which these dark rogues continue to rob you. I was confined to my bed with fever, and just recovering, when one of these fellows managed to take a frock-coat and some other articles, which were thrown over the foot of my bedstead. I saw the articles there the night before they were missing; in the morning they were gone.

Whoever might be the culprit it was hard to say; but the difficulty presented, at the time, to the commission of such an act, from a variety of circumstances, served to show the expertness and foxy craftiness of these rogues, who, as I have heard it said, and believe, will crawl all-fours into your room with the stealthiness of a serpent, and oil their bodies to escape the grasp, if surprised in the act. At all events, I was no longer possessor of a new and expensive coat, which, no doubt,

is now gracing the shoulders of some fashionable bushman or village-dandy, who like to have their "Sunday best," as well as their White neighbours. Watches are very favourite articles and in much demand; and they will not lose a chance of getting such a prize, if in their reach. From the same house, where I was staying for a time, the person with whom I lived lost a valuable article of this description, notwithstanding it was secreted where he believed it was almost impossible for any one to find it. It is curious, too, to notice, how these pilferers take the best if they can of what you have, and how systematically and cautiously they pursue their villanies. The merchant, and such as are in business, are dreadfully exposed to these miscreants, in the numerous persons they are obliged to have about them. But in truth, no one is safe: two extensive robberies were committed in succession, at no long intervals, on two most respectable persons, who lost large sums; the sufferers belonged to the Church Mission, and could ill afford so severe a privation. It requires, indeed, the strictest vigilance and circumspection to escape the thievish tricks of the black man, and you will do well to remember your cupboards, wine-cellar, flour-house, and kitchen, your meat-sieve also, before you retire to rest. And if you are fond of eggs for breakfast, be advised to look

after the feathered family yourself, and keep the key of their dormitory, else they will lay anywhere but where you want them, and the chicken-serpent will be a constant visitor, although the real egg-fancier is to be recognised in your cook or your horseman. Serve the rice out, also, yourself, for their daily consumption; for of this they are ravenously fond, and will make to themselves an appetite for "mammy" and "picky," at home, if you do not look out.

But there is a stealing which comes of lighter and more delicate fingering, and which the novice in African legerdemain will do well to anticipate. I allude to the nurses, who will take good care of themselves at your expense; and fortunate you may esteem yourself, if, on your recovery, you have to complain of no greater loss than some dozen bottles of ale and wine, a score or two of candles, and a fever-epidemic amongst the poultry. I knew an individual who, with his wife, were "down," that is sick with fever, of which the latter ultimately died. On examination, their ward-robes, particularly that of the deceased, were literally rifled of the most valuable of the dresses and linen. It cannot be difficult where to fix the suspicion. Yet the greatest liberality was shown to those who attended them, and, moreover, nurses are handsomely paid, as they receive a dollar a

day, besides being well supplied with everything which they want.

In speaking of thefts, I remember a curious case which I heard myself. The fellow, who was on his trial for either the crime or concealment of the stolen property, was, undoubtedly, and in the opinion of all present, guilty. He was an old offender, and by his shrewdness and effrontery, combined with a considerable degree of tact, had, hitherto, foiled all attempts to convict him. There was nothing unprepossessing in his appearance, but the reverse; and his look was that of intelligence. I believe he had to lament that day; yet he completely nullified the evidence of the principal witness, a coloured woman. It was really amusing to observe, when he was challenged to put any question which he wished to her, with what coolness, caution, and acumen he confronted her. There was, and it was unavoidable, a general titter; the known roguery of the accused, the severe consequences which would follow conviction, the earnestness with which he interrogated the witness, and the telling points which sharpened his cross-examination, all bespeaking an anxiety on the part of the accused, intense, yet admirably subdued by his self-control, rendered it impossible not to smile, if it did not almost force you to admire natural talent so ill-

employed. He first, unsuspectedly, but powerfully worked upon her feelings, and thus putting the witness out of temper, he threw her off her guard, and so completely mastered her, that the judge was compelled more than once to remind her of the position in which she stood. She prevaricated, and got into a passion: she shook herself: she would have bolted from the witness-box. His honour, the chief justice, looked unusually grave, as well he might, at the thought of such an arch knave escaping: the jury eyed one another, as if fearful of the verdict they might have to give; but the person most interested in the matter—the prisoner in the dock—remained changeless in feature, firm and collected. I could not remain to hear the verdict; but I left the court convinced, as every one must have been, that “guilty” or “not guilty,” this clever thief might once more elude the hands of justice.

But the most inexcusable instance of roguery was that which was committed by a Krooman, of the name of Bob Krew, whose history and fate are not common. Bob was by nature a thief, and he was a clever and formidable one. His strength and daring made him the terror of every person; and the police would rather undertake any job than the capture of Bob. The current report was that our hero was always armed with some offen-

sive weapons to keep off intruders; at last, however, he was surprized and put into prison. The time of his confinement had nearly expired, and his discharge was offered him if he would hang an unfortunate criminal who was sentenced to death for murder. Liberty pleaded successfully with Bob, and he undertook the office of Jack Ketch. On being out of limbo, he resorted immediately to his old tricks, and one of the first acts he did was to rob his master, notwithstanding the latter had kindly administered to his distress by some pecuniary donation.

One Sunday, as I was descending the back stairs of the prison, after the conclusion of my duty at the gaol, I was, somewhat to my surprise, hailed in a stentorian voice :

“ Parson ! parson ! ” cried somebody.

Looking up, I beheld poor Bob’s manly form on the landing-place above me, with nothing but a native cloth thrown around him, in country fashion, and his head tied with a handkerchief, for this is a custom with the native, when ill. “ Master, master ! ” he continued, “ my heart trouble me too much.”

“ What is the matter, Bob ? ” I asked.

“ My heart trouble me, master ; ” and he put his hand to his breast. “ I killed a man, master ! ”

Startled at the observation, I looked at him intently, and resumed.

“What did you say, Bob?”

He repeated his words.

I sent directly for the deputy-gaoler, and bid him speak to the prisoner, and ask him what he intended to tell me.

“Ah, master!” he continued, “I hang that man, the other day, and I fear I do wrong; it trouble me much!”

I could scarcely suppress a smile; and soon set Bob’s mind at ease on that point, admonishing him at the same time, to take warning from the past, how he conducted himself for the future, lest he should reverse the character he had so lately sustained. The poor fellow heard my exhortation with respectful attention, and touching his head—for he had no hat—retired to his confinement, whilst I made the best of my way home. Bob was still a prisoner, when I left Sierra Leone!

CHAPTER VII.

WILLIAMS THE PENITENT MURDERER.—A REFLECTION.—LAST HOURS IN PRISON.—CONTRAST OF CHARACTER IN ANOTHER MURDERER.—MODE OF EXECUTIONS, AND SOME REMARKS THEREON.—THE EXECUTIONER'S WAY OF DISFIGURING HIMSELF.—INTEREST MANIFESTED IN THE CASE OF WILLIAMS, AND FEELING AGAINST HIS FEMALE ACCOMPLICE: POPULAR ERROR IN RESPECT TO THE EXECUTION OF WOMEN.—WHAT THE EFFECT OF THE PUNISHMENT OF DEATH IN TENDING TO THE DIMINUTION OF CRIME IN SIERRA LEONE.

THE sessions are ended: well-dressed managers and aristocratic-looking magistrates, from the various districts, cease to put the town in a bustle; the messenger, with his master's tin box on his head; the constable, with his half-glazed, half-cloth hat, his office-buttoned coat, of which he is as proud as if the metal were made of gold; his stockingless legs, and shoes in hand, no longer group about the gaol with their handcuffs and staffs, or din your ears with their perpetual jargon. The corners of the streets are destitute of their knots of idle, half-dressed, quarrelling women. The inducements to hospitality, and the exchange

of idle talk for the more agreeable topics of friendly and varied conversation, with those whose duties separate them in the far distance from their townsmen, for many a tedious month, are gone with those who brought them. Even the suspense of guilt, awaiting and fearfully anticipating its trial, or writhing under the first impressions of conviction and condemnation, has lost its feverish excitement. But there is one who, in the loneliness and silence of his cell, abstracted from all outward objects, is ruminating over past events with an almost paralyzing intensity of recollection. The voice of the judge, whose feelings, perhaps, were far more acute in pronouncing than were those of him who heard the most awful of all sentences which can come from an earthly tribunal, is not heard by him, but his conscience tells him he is a murderer; and he scarcely dares to look at his own hands, manacled as they are, for he knows and feels they were the instruments of a deed of blood! Poor Williams! thy crime and thy penitence deserve a record! I have already remarked that one of my duties was to minister at the gaol; and to visit and prepare this unhappy man for an ignominious and violent death soon fell to my lot. Williams, who was an African, and once respectable and harmless, in the general opinion, was inveigled by the jealous artifices and

threats of a worthless woman, to commit a most barbarous murder. Of his guilt there was not a doubt, and he was left to his fate. My first visit to the unhappy creature, as might be expected, was unserviceable. He had not recovered sufficiently from the shock to be capable of being either comforted or exhorted: but when calm enough for the instructions of religion, I soon discovered in him, that his natural disposition was not perversely vicious, and his crime not the result of a system of growing wickedness. Under no circumstances, perhaps, which demand the interposition of the clergyman, are his judgment and delicacy so much required, as in a case of this kind; and it was a responsibility from which I should have shrunk but for a sense of duty and reliance on the assistance of a higher Power to direct me in my arduous task. A little kindness on my part soon gained me his confidence, and I became daily more interested about him. He unburdened his heart freely and unreservedly to me, and, unsolicitedly, confessed his guilt with tears of, in my deliberate opinion, sincere contrition.

I am not given to that amiable weakness, and easy credulity, or, call it what people may, to that propensity common to minds of a certain temperament, which so readily accredits death-bed

repentances, and the contritions of those whose lives, up to almost the hour when retribution having overtaken them, leaves them incapable of the power to do evil or good;—to hope, in such cases, is our privilege and comfort; but to believe implicitly every outward demonstration made by a criminal in such an extreme, is to deceive ourselves and others with a dreadful fallacy, opposed to the immutable nature of Infinite Justice. Williams's case, however, affords grounds for an exception. His life had not been uniformly bad; his crime, although unpardonable in this world, was committed under circumstances, which cannot indeed extenuate, but may, and to my mind did, sanction the conclusion I came to subsequent to his condemnation, and during the few last days of his existence. Although my visits were made to him twice in the day, they were not sufficient. He was prayerful, and very meek; his whole demeanour was that of a man sensible of and sorry for his sin; he always manifested great satisfaction when I went to see him, and would, with a pressure of my hand, look up into my face, and ask me to come soon again. To satisfy myself and the public, as far as possible, of the real state of his heart, and watch, what I began to consider the gradual progress of an honest repentance, I would sometimes make him

an unexpected visit, late at night, when I always found the poor fellow, his sorrowful eyes uplifted to heaven, his face towards the wall, his fettered hands clasped in prayer, and kneeling in reverential humility before his offended Maker: and, on these occasions, he would be quite unconscious of my presence. I never disturbed, but bent the knee beside him, and never have I risen with more comfort from such a duty, than when the only earthly eye which saw me was that of the soldier who kept guard in his cell. To his solicitations to receive the most solemn of all the Church's rites, I would not, at first, accede, and delayed doing so until the day before he suffered, which was Sunday. It has always appeared to me, and I offer the remark with deference to others of my profession, that a practice, too indiscriminate and unwarrantable in this respect, is pursued by ministers of religion, detrimental to its cause, and cruelly deceptive in its results. Some few years ago, in a different sphere of labour, I had an opportunity of witnessing a case in point. It was not for me to interfere; but I never saw so sad a misapplication of so sacred a privilege: I neither refused nor promised; but doing all I could to elicit the true state of his heart, his conceptions and motives in regard to the object of his desire, found myself justified

at the last to do what would have been rashness in the first instance to have performed. Two or three very touching and interesting circumstances came under my notice, at this time. In one of my interviews with the prisoner, on asking him if he could die in forgiveness with all, and particularly the woman, who, morally speaking, was the worse of the two, and the authoress of his misery, but who escaped the sterner vengeance of the law, he said; "Oh, yes, I forgive all; I forgive that bad woman. I am glad to die, God is good to me to bring me to die; I now die happy:—but I want to talk to that woman to repent, for she make me do that thing, and make me drink to kill him." This merciless, savage creature was sent for; and the manner in which he showed to her the participation she had with him in the offence, and reminded her of the threats and instigations she used to urge him to his crime, as well as the calm, and sensible, and warning appeal which he addressed to her, affected those present deeply. "Good-bye," said he, ending his address to her, "I hope God will forgive you, as he does me." The day before he underwent his sentence, he sent for me, late at night, and I went to the prison with two friends, whose presence I wished for many reasons. It was to have my last prayers, to take a formal last farewell of me, and to speak

on a subject which appeared much to affect him. When we were met, he turned himself to one of the gentlemen present, and said, "I have nothing more to do now, but die, and shall be glad for the time to come; but I have a little brother," here the tears trickled down his cheek, "will you get some one to take care of him, and keep him from doing bad?" On receiving an assurance to that purpose, he became perfectly composed, thanked us all for our kindness, particularly the gaolers, and asked me to say a prayer. Observing we were all affected, he remarked, "Why do you do so, why do you cry? you do not see me do so, I am happy." On the scaffold he addressed a few parting words to the crowd, which, in a dense mass, thronged around the scaffold, erected outside the prison gates, betraying no fear, and showing, at the same time, no bravado. The purport of his words was to beware of bad women. "God bless you all! I am going home," he added.—"God bless you," sounded forth from many lips, and the penitent murderer was no more.

How different the demeanour of a criminal of a like character as to the offence, who came under my ministerial care at a later period of my residence in the colony; but whose portraiture possesses none of those redeeming quali-

ties which divest crime of its heinousness; and, in spite of ourselves, fill us with a commendable pity. All the sullenness and stubbornness of hardened guilt was manifested in this man's behaviour. He disregarded prayer; he was insensible to kindness, to exhortation, to warning. He made his cell the abode of the silence of wickedness, which was deaf to remonstrance and persuasion, and would not speak, or answer any question which was put to him. He seemed to take pleasure in shutting himself up in himself. Yet he had taken life, for reasons no one could ascertain; yet in a position which stamped upon his deed the revolting stigma of having violated with blood the rites of hospitality. He had been kindly welcomed and housed for the night by a neighbour, in his hut; and he arose in the hour of midnight silence to become the assassin of his confiding host. The conviction of this man is worthy relation, for it followed a circumstance which shows how narrowly a wretch escaped that punishment which morbid sympathy would do away with altogether. The attempt at murder had not proved instantly fatal; and the victim was spared long enough to allow depositions to be taken. His precarious state however, dictated to one of the medical gentlemen who visited the wounded man, the propriety of

such evidence as he could give; and he accordingly sent for the police magistrate, whose activity and zeal brought him quickly to the chamber of the dying man. The perpetrator was scarcely identified amongst several who were promiscuously introduced, before death closed the eyes of the sufferer. But the indifference and daring of this cold-blooded villain failed him at that moment, when the self-possession of a very different spirit is necessary to preserve us from the imputation of a despicable cowardice, and, at least, to command attention. On the morning of his execution, and when the last scene of the last act of life was about to be closed, he was led almost insensible to the drop, and there supported by two policemen in a state of insensibility until the white wands of the officers were broken over him, as he hung a lifeless form from the scaffold; which, projecting from the window of the passage on a level with the court-room, commanded an extensive view of the town and surrounding country. I believe the meaning of breaking the wands over the prisoner is to show, that the law has been fulfilled, and all palaver then settled. Notwithstanding the state of mind and heart in which this criminal met his doom, he was heard to say on the morning of his execution, "My spirit is already gone," and the dread

of death seemed, nevertheless, to act so powerfully upon him, that on mounting the platform he shrunk back, as it were, with an instinctive horror from beneath the fatal beam, and was obliged, necessarily, to be supported.

As to executions in Free-town,—and there only the law is allowed to take its course,—there is much wanting in the preparations to give due solemnity to them, to save unnecessary delay, which is a painful prolonging of mental distress, and to make example effective. Whatever tends, however undesignedly, to add to the bitterness of such a dying hour, in the preliminaries or close of it, should be mercifully avoided. Delay but tortures; and the slightest irregularity may discompose a mind the best prepared to face the king of terrors. The public, moreover, are the spectators; and that class too, of the public, who, although not easily moved by such spectacles, nor keenly alive to that sensitiveness which the perception of more refined natures might be led to find cause for on such occasions, are, notwithstanding, capable of discernment. On them it is that example should produce its effect, and by its publicity. But that effect will not be obtained, if there be anything wanting to solemnize it. The usual way, therefore, of erecting the machine of death outside the prison walls is

not so suitable as making it communicate with one of the gaol windows. In the former instance the prisoner is obliged to cross some length of the yard to the gates; then to await their being opened; to ascend a common ladder of no easy footing, and to be probably exposed to additional distress. A circumstance which happened at the execution of Williams will explain these remarks. After being detained for some seconds, he mounted the ladder, having round his neck the rope, one end of which the executioner held, and, as if afraid of his victim escaping, secured as he was, and hemmed in by numerous military and police. By an unexpected check he was suddenly drawn back, and almost thrown off his balance; when, turning round to the hangman, the poor fellow chid him gently, saying, "Why do you stop me? let me go up, can't you?" Accident as this might have been, it was a painful hindrance, and would not, most likely, have taken place, if a different arrangement had been made, and which is not without its precedent.

All unmeaning parade and unnecessary delay on such an occasion may well be spared; but these are unavoidable in the plan commonly followed. And not only this,—it encourages also a very pernicious taste for that sort of exhibition, which, divested as much as it can be of its horrible nature, is at

the best a revolting spectacle. The movement from the cell to the scaffold, which is short and quiet when made within the gaol, spares the criminal the misery of being so much disturbed in his last moments; whilst it lessens not in the least the effect of public example. And if the scaffold itself were more commodiously and securely framed, so that those officials whose sad business it is to take part in such melancholy proceedings, could take their stand upon it, in company with the other officers, whose duty it is to be there, it would be a measure for which they would be thankful. For my own part, I declined running any hazard of breaking my own neck in a less legal, but equally certain method, by adventuring beyond the line of the window; and the Sheriff, I presume, was not less cautious, so we both stood opposite to each other, as near the scaffold as was prudent. Nor did those who were obliged to go further upon the platform, seem to be altogether free from apprehensions. Thus, perhaps, something was lost to the Effect of Example by our not appearing more prominently; for Example fails in its object, as every one must admit who is a judge of even his own feelings, when deficient in its solemnities, and requires something more than the mere matter-of-fact of taking one life for the destruction of another.

Severe as were the struggles which the unenviable nature of my office compelled within my own breast, and difficult as I found it to retain my self-possession and dignity of composure in the discharge of such duties, my indignation was roused at the gross mockery of office which was displayed by the wretch of a hangman. The man painted his ugly visage in the most merry-andrew fashion with white and red colours, broadly marking his forehead just above the eyebrows with white, and other parts of his face with red. Not content with this method of disfiguring himself, he decked his head with a Tom fool's cap, and thus ornamented, did his ugly work. It was sickening to see such a mummer of a man, grinning like a demon from under the scaffold, where he awaited the signal to finish the most odious part of retributive justice.

I could not soon, or easily banish from my mind the painful sensations to which such scenes gave rise. They continued for many days to disturb me; but they were not without their salutary influence as concerned myself; for they taught me a lesson, too little attended to, but which is not without its instruction: that if the cell of the malefactor be darkened with the terrors of crime and agonies of impenitence, it is also sometimes brightened by the noblest examples of unaffected contrition and pious resignation, to which many are strangers.

The case of Williams was one of considerable interest, and the fate of the woman who was tried with him for the same offence, was anticipated with an anxiety almost partaking of a vindictive character. Her depravity and the horrible part she took in this tragedy were, indeed, such as to seem to excuse the feeling, which thus indulged itself against her. She was not certainly deserving any commiseration: and great was the excitement, when it was found that so abandoned a miscreant had escaped a punishment which I think she merited quite as much as the convicted. But whatever may be the opinion as to her guilt or innocence, the judge had his duty to perform, regardless of every other consideration or motive, to try her by evidence, and on evidence alone to convict or acquit of the capital offence. That evidence the Bench did not consider strong and positive enough to do more than it did; and, therefore, it did rightly. There is an odd notion, current amongst the native population of a certain rank, that there are some scruples and obstacles, which will not allow of a woman being hanged. They would be very sorry nevertheless, I suspect, to find themselves in the hazardous situation of a convicted murderer at the bar of justice in Freetown. Whatever has led to so absurd an idea, I would so far undeceive those who indulge in

such a fancy, as to recommend them not to mistake the exercise of a wise leniency for either unwillingness on the part of the Bench to punish when it becomes an imperative duty to do so, or inability in the power of the executive to enforce the fulfilment of a punishment, when proved guilt provokes its infliction.

The question has often arisen in my mind whilst reflecting upon this capital punishment, as a means of checking the crime of murder, as applicable to Sierra Leone, whether it accomplishes the primary and most important objects for which it was designed? As a means to deter, *by terror*, from the greatest of offences which can be committed against man or God, I think the end contemplated by it is not answered. For within somewhat less a period than that of five years, five persons (three Spaniards and two Natives) have been executed for murder; and it may be doubted, moreover, whether the extreme penalty of the law, abstractedly considered as an act of annihilation, without reference to any other impressions which it may be capable of producing on the senses, possesses, in the ideas of that class of Africans which sends forth such criminals to shock mankind, that species of dread which so powerfully affects other nations and intelligencies, more sensitive, from a variety of reasons unknown to the former, to

the thought of that mysterious change which follows the separation of soul and body. I come to this conclusion from the stoical indifference and unconcern with which I have observed several of them die, in circumstances in which they have been placed by accidents that have terminated in a premature and unnatural decease. As to the *ignominy* which, in the eye of European society, is inseparable from such a punishment, and so unredeemingly disgraces those who by their crimes incur it, it strikes me that they are under little or no influence on this account. Viewing the punishment of death, therefore, in relation to the two objects which it is supposed to embrace, the suppression of the crime of murder, by terror and shame, as it affects the community of the colony in its reformation in this particular, there is little to say in its favour.

In the cases which have come under my observation through the channel of my ordinary duties, the probable effect produced by such spectacles must be judged by the conduct of those who have suffered for murder. In that of Williams there was much to command attention and claim commiseration. That behaviour which, although in the person of a murderer, can supply such proofs of remorse and sorrow for guilt, can present to public view such a genuine testimony of resigna-

tion, humility, and Christian deportment in the most trying of all positions, is not to be despised: it may be, perhaps, respected; and, doubtless it, will eloquently appeal to the heart and gain its sympathy. Yet, if the sight of such a spectacle leaves upon the minds of the multitude no other impression than such feelings, it does nothing towards restraining the passions of our nature by controlling them through the agency of that terror and shame, without whose salutary control lawless violence and intemperate anger would too triumphantly spread their evils far and wide around us.

As to the case to which I have subsequently alluded, surely nothing profitable, as an example, could be expected from witnessing the most abject instance of stupid moral cowardice which could well be displayed. In respect to the case of the two Spaniards who suffered whilst I was absent from the colony, the accounts which have come to my knowledge concerning their demeanour at their execution, leave all question as to the efficacy of punishment by death as an example unnecessary.

It is only to be regretted that men, lost as they are reported to have been, to all concern about their guilt or its consequences, should have been permitted to insult, as they did, by their daring

and indecent behaviour, the sacredness of that dignity which is the prerogative of the laws, and thus to have encouraged others to regard with unconcern, if not levity, the most awful and severe of all their penal enactments. It is useless to look for any other inference than what the most common sense will form from such premises, and that is, the object of capital punishment was not, in this instance, attained.

And, yet, to abolish the punishment of death in Sierra Leone, viewing the question entirely apart from every argument but that of expediency, would be to let loose upon the community the most ungovernable and wildest elements of the worst portion of its society. Released from this check, inadequate as it often proves in its operation, yet the only one which offers anything like a means of successfully stemming the torrent of vice and crime, there would be no security for life and property. And then there is an authority of a higher and more coercive nature than is to be drawn from human laws, respecting the taking of the life of man, how such an act should be dealt with, which is not so easily to be cancelled. Looking at this crime in the consequences which it entails on the victim, in regard to the future, and the tendency to commit it, which is kept alive by the habits and dispositions of the natives, in deciding for its re-

tention or abolition, justice and necessity require its continuance, at all events in Africa. What can atone for that deed which sends us to our account,

“No reckoning made, with all our imperfections on our head?”

or what severity can be too severe for an act, which may leave repentance unavailing, and blot out of the Book of Life the Hope of erring man for ever?

CHAPTER VIII.

STREETS. — HOUSES. — WATER-STREET. — SEA-VIEW FROM THE
PIAZZAS. — THE MARKET PLACE. — CUSTOM-HOUSE. — POLICE
OFFICE. — FISH-MARKET. — THE SHARK. — BOY KILLED BY ONE
WHILE SWIMMING NEAR KING TOWN. — THE COLONIAL CHURCH,
ST. GEORGE'S. — ENORMOUS EXPENDITURE IN ITS BUILDING. —
STRANGE MISTAKE IN THE COMMANDMENTS WITHIN THE ALTAR
RAILINGS. — PEWS. — FIRST TIME OF OFFICIATING AT ST.
GEORGE'S, AND MY FEELINGS ON THE OCCASION.

If you are a stranger to the colony of Sierra Leone, when you see it for the first time you will be struck with its general appearance ; and should your arrival be at that time of the year when the rains are nearly over, or the dry season has not so far advanced as to destroy their fertilizing effects on the face of the country, it will agreeably surprise and charm you.

The streets, which are broad and intersect each other at right angles, are then covered with a luxuriant Bermuda grass : this useful and pretty herb-age, altogether different from that which clothes our lawns and fields in England, trails itself closely and thickly over the ground like the ivy, courting

and clinging to whatsoever it comes in contact with, affording a delightful relief for the eye against the strong reflection of the sun, and yielding a plentiful grazing to the numerous cattle which, notwithstanding the law of poundage is not unknown there, are suffered to graze for the most part unmolested, and enjoy their delicate and rich feeding. They are, frequently, a great nuisance, but they would be missed in the picture.

Many of the houses are very good, substantial, and commodious, and much attention has of late been given to the construction of the buildings in style and material. The stores, or shops, are on the ground floor in general, and the rooms above these are used for domestic purposes. The kitchens are, invariably, distinct from the dwelling in some part of the yard; most of them are airy and spacious, well furnished and English in every respect. The progress, indeed, of improvement in this colony, in every thing pertaining to the comforts and conveniences of civilized life, has been wonderful, even during my residence in Free-town. The principal dwellings are well aired, and lighted by glass windows, supplied with fire-places, and displaying all the necessities and nick-nackeries essential to complete an English parlour and drawing-room. The floors are matted or covered with oilcloth, and sometimes carpeted; the walls are

tastily papered and ornamented with paintings and prints,—gay chandeliers, suspended from the ceiling, light up the dinner-table on grand occasions, and the furniture, in all its minutiae, is complete. The easy-chair, the ottoman, and the sofa, are there to invite you to a doze or a lounge; and mirrors and looking-glasses to enliven the apartment and gratify the vanity; and, if in murky or thoughtful mood, “*O nimium fortunati*,” there are mantel-pieces—laugh as much as you please—to rest your elbow on, and your head upon your elbow; and on a dull and cheerless day, when the heavens are pouring down their torrents upon you, and you are left to yourself and your thoughts, such an indulgence, over a blazing fire—for we had our fires then in Sierra Leone,—once known will not be despised. The bed-room and the piazza are the most important parts of the house: the former for health, the latter for recreation and agreeableness. The sleeping apartment is the “all in all;” and to secure yourself, as far as it is possible, from sickness and fever, you cannot pay too much attention to the selection of this;—moreover, when the tornados rage and the lightning makes the occupation of the piazza dangerous, you are in comparative safety if your bed-room is well chosen. Some are so indiscreet as to sleep in the former part of the house; but it is very foolish to

do so, and has proved fatal to health and life in more than one instance. During the day, and in the evening before you retire, the piazza is to be preferred: there you dine and take your tea, and smoke and read the "Illustrated London News;" or look out from behind the Jalousies to see what is going on abroad, or make yourself tired until it is time to welcome the best friend of night, "gentle sleep," and "steep your senses in forgetfulness."

I was very much pleased with Water-street, which begins at the Parade-ground, and extending itself parallel with the beach, terminates with the wall of the Liberated African's Yard. The merchants' houses on the seaward side of this street, with their stores and yards, make a good show. They are lofty; and their lengthy and roomy piazzas, looking right down upon and over the ocean, are refreshing and cheerful exchanges for the incessant confusion and noise of the many voices of those who are occupied at their business in the stores below, or the broad open space which fronts the dwelling. Many agreeable hours have I passed in these African galleries, inhaling the bracing sea-breeze, and finding a variety of interesting objects to engage the attention. Here I have observed, with indescribable pleasure, the light-canoe, dancing buoyantly, like a cork, on the

heaving swell of the briny waters; and followed its swift career, paddled with a celerity surprising to a novice, over the glassy bosom of the deep, until it became a mere speck in the distance. Here, too, I have felt all the emotions of excitement in marking with all the anxiety of one whose heart is in his native country, the slow approach of some noble merchant vessel, slipping gracefully, although sluggishly through the water; or beheld, with the pride of an Englishman, the gallant bearing of a man-of-war, darting along in her course with eagle speed. See, how she breasts the waters which sport around her bow, and throw aloft their white spray, sparkling in the sun as if to welcome into the harbour! There, at anchor, lies an English steamer, just come in with the mail! How beats the heart with hope and fear until it is landed, and the well-known hand of some dear friend or relative is recognised, with no black edge bordering the letter? "All's well," this time! Splash, splash; the French man-of-war steamer is just showing herself at King Tom's Point, belching forth volumes of black smoke, displaying her tri-coloured flag of Republicanism! Oh, Liberty! thou art an enviable possession, but a fickle favourite. The eagle soars not so high, but his flight is subject to the arrow's point! And, what is that broken-up hulk, mastless, and despoiled of all its

rigging ! She looks suspicious even in her desolation. And well she may, for she was a slaver ! There is another not far off, not yet condemned, beautiful in her build, and made to cut away with the swiftness of the hawk before the wind and the pursuer ! But, oh, what tales of misery and suffering are written on thy deck ! What agonies of mind and body have the pitiless hands of thy ruthless crew inflicted on their fellow-men within thy hold !

It is on this side of the street I am describing that you will find the Market-place, which occupies a space between the houses and is entered through some iron gates. Here you may procure everything you want for the Table ;—fruit, vegetables, corn, rice, pepper, and at a reasonable price. And, if you are inclined to indulge a taste for articles of native curiosity and manufacture, all kinds of odd things, and pretty things, and ugly things, are at your disposal. Monkeys, parrots, calibashes ; leopards' skins and monkeys' skins ; floor and table-mats ; native sofas and tables ; spears, bows, and arrows ; fancy-worked caps and cloths, with a variety of other things. But you will have to pay for these nick-nacks, unless you are accustomed to deal with the venders ; for they know how to charge and are not over-conscientious in asking an unfair price. Gold rings may also be purchased of every shape and size ; some of these are very curiously

twisted, the natives displaying a great deal of cleverness and ingenuity in the workmanship of these articles. Leathern sandals, too, are to be purchased, if you prefer them to shoes, which many of those who come from the more distant villages and districts seem to do. There is scarcely anything, indeed, which you will not, at times meet with in this singular emporium—for money is the African's idol; it is his mammon. For coppers he will do almost anything, and part with almost anything, from the bush-cat to the greegree or bit of Koran which superstition hangs about his neck.

Scarcely a stone's throw from the market-place is the Custom-House and Police Magistrate's Office, where he sits daily from ten to four. These form one large and commodious building. In the lower part, which is well adapted to its purpose, goods imported, as well as exported, are stowed. The offices which are over this vault are set apart for public business, chiefly that of the customs, which are conducted by a collector and three or four clerks. This building has been only erected since I went to Sierra Leone; it was much wanted for a long time, and is an ornament to this part of the town, as well as serving greatly to facilitate public business, and stands central and alone at nearly the extremity of the street, towards the gaol.

A few yards beyond is an old bridge, which

crosses a deep and precipitous hollow that traverses the road and abruptly descends the beach. Down this the mountain-torrent, in the rainy season, rolls its angry and muddy waters; but during the rest of the year it is uninteresting, except for the noisy palaver which is going on below. Here is the Fish-market, and a scene of confusion it may well be called. From morn to night are to be seen, and what is worse, are to be heard, all the sounds of discord which such a promiscuous assemblage may be supposed capable of pouring forth. Up and down the naturally formed steps, which irregularly lead to the boats, men, women, and children, are passing and repassing with their Blies of fish, bundles of wood, and huge bunches of plantains and bananas. Some are squatted on the ground with their trays of dried fish, Foofoo balls, palm-oil, cassada, and yam, wrangling, squabbling, and scolding, as if they alone were permitted to use that most troublesome member of humanity, the tongue. In my visits to the gaol I seldom, if ever, passed this spot without stopping for a few moments to observe the movements and actions of the strange creatures, half civilized, half barbarous, in their dealings with one another. Generally speaking, there is a large supply of fish, and it is good and cheap; considerable quantities of it are dried both for home-consumption and

sale ; for it is an important and chief article of food. There is a kind of mackerel not unlike our own, but very inferior to it in flavour, and not so well shaped, nor so prettily marked. Mangrove oysters are plentiful ; and there is a shell-fish of that species called the Carpenter-Rock oyster. These are very large and coarse, and put me in mind of a piece of tough meat, or very bad sweet bread ; but some persons are very fond of them ; and, to tell the truth, the old saying, "Variety is pleasing," is never more felt than in Sierra Leone, even in such trifles as the "*edenda*" of the table. These oysters take their name from the rocks on which they are found, and whence they are broken off in large pieces.

I recollect, on one occasion of marooning near the cape, seeing a beautiful fish, similar to our salmon-trout in form, and spotted like it. It was about three or four pounds in weight, very delicious treat, and as I understood, called a Sea, or Salt-water salmon, or trout. There is, beside, a large fish called the Barakoota, which is in much request, and is to be met with only at a particular time of the year ; when, it is no sooner seen rolling and tossing itself out of the water, as it shoots swiftly through the tops of the waves than the fishermen are instantly off for their prize. That part of the sea, where they are sporting, soon pre-

sents a spirited picture of boats in motion, and the adventurers seldom fail of catching several; but they are obliged to be quick in the pursuit, as these fish do not remain long in the same place.

The Barakoota is sold, and prepared for the table in much the same way as our cod-fish, which it somewhat resembles in appearance, and is like it in its flavour. It makes a very fair dish. But there is a most delicious little fellow, which reminded me of the white bait, and is quite as *recherché* to the epicure. It is met with everywhere in large shoals, and proves as acceptable to the fish as to the fisher; for they are used as baits. I have not only seen, but smelt them, at a good distance, when walking over the rocks, where they are spread about to be dried for the purpose I have mentioned. Crabs and craw-fish are sometimes to be obtained. It is amusing to watch the thousands of small crabs, when the tide is out, scampering over the sand sideways into their holes or the sea, where the greater part of them make their way, whenever disturbed by the approach of any one. How strong is the love of self-preservation in the smallest of the animal creation; and how powerful the instinct, which directs to their natural and proper element these awkward little creatures! Their shells vary in colour; and some of them are very beautiful. But on this

part of the coast sea-shells are seldom or ever met with, and what are picked up are not worth keeping. The only one I saw, was what is called the Sea-Snail. There is turtle here, and of a large size ; but it cannot be compared with that of the Bahamas ; nor can you procure it so readily as in those islands. Whilst speaking of the inhabitants of the vast deep, there is one we must not pass by :

“ Here dwells the direful shark, lured by the scent
Of steaming crowds, of rank disease and death.
Behold ! he rushing cuts the briny flood,
Swift as the gale can bear the ship along ;
And, from the partners of that cruel trade
Which spoils unhappy Guinea of her sons,
Demands his share of prey ; demands themselves.
The stormy fates descend : one death involves
Tyrants and slaves ; when straight, their mangled limbs
Crashing at once, he dyes the purple seas
With gore, and riots in the vengeful meal.”

This terrible and voracious creature, unhappily, abounds in this part of the coast, and is often seen of a large size. From the windows of the merchants' houses, which front the harbour, you may observe him, in quest of the offal, refuse, and dead carcasses, which yield him an ample meal. Yet Nature has, in compassion, made some provision for guarding against his attack ; for his dark, dun-coloured fin, generally

peeping above the water, where he moves, gives warning of his approach, and tells the swimmer to make the best of his way to shore, if not, lucklessly, too near to be unable to escape his scent. If in a boat and he is close at hand, woe to the ill-fated person then who may fall into the water, unless he is a strong and skilful swimmer ; and that does not always serve to save him. Yet once, whilst at the Cape, I saw a canoe capsized, at a long distance from the shore with three or four natives, who were in it ; and some delay took place in sending out a boat to their assistance ; but, happily, they met with no misfortune from such a danger.

During, however, the earlier part of my residence in the colony, a poor youth, one of the scholars at King Tom's Institution, fell a sacrifice to his imprudence in going out too far, as he was swimming with several others of his companions. It is said, that the shark is a cowardly fish, and easily kept off by noise and numbers ; but I should be sorry to risk my safety on this opinion. The fate of this lad contradicts the idea, for he was seized by one of them whilst in company with his fellow-pupils. Having struck out a little from them and, being grasped by the creature, he screamed out : at first, the cry was not regarded, for his playmates thought he was pretending to be hurt ; but on the scream being repeated, they turned

to him and saw the fatal truth—the blood-stained water too sadly confirmed it. They repelled the enemy, and were assisting their companion as fast as they could to the beach, when the monster, savage after his prey, made another, and successful snap at him. The boy was landed, but died almost directly.

It has often supplied me with a subject of amusement, in my many passages across the Atlantic, particularly when making the coast, to watch the sharks following the ship at her stern, one while showing his dreaded form beneath the surface of the wave, now engulfed in the valley of waters, or borne on their summits; and, like the vessel which he glides after, steadily, yet swiftly, and, as if conscious there was food for him on board, moving in his pirate tract without any scarcely perceptible effort. His murky colour, broad-lined jaws, his flat-head, small, keen, deadly-looking eye show his capacity and bespeak a reception of no agreeable nature, should you fall overboard. Most heartily do those whose business takes them over the waters wish him far away and hail his capture. I once saw a large one caught and hauled on deck. What a triumph every one seemed to manifest! The tail, from which you may receive a very nasty thump, for therein is his great strength, was chopped off as quickly

as possible ; but even then he was an object of apprehension,

“ His jaws terrific, armed with triple fate ; ”

and Jack, with all his dauntlessness, thought it wise not to make advances near his mouth, until he was fairly despatched. The teeth of this creature are not only strong and made for the most deadly grasp, but are exceedingly beautiful and uniform in their setting.

But to return to land topics. The principal object of interest, in Water Street, is the colonial church, St. George's, which stands nearly central in it, and on the opposite side to the market-place. It is incredible what a sinful waste of money has been made in the erection and repairing of this building ; and withal, it is, so far as architecture, style, and taste are concerned, a model of barbarism. I have heard it repeatedly asserted that not less than *forty thousand* pounds have, at different times, been expended upon it ; and yet its appearance would not lead you to suppose that a fourth of that sum could have been laid out. It is certainly, to be considered, that at the time this edifice was raised, both the material and labour, required in building, were much more expensive than in the present day ; but money was also more easily to be raised than it has been

since. Artisans had not then, too, attained to the abilities which they can now boast; neither did work of this kind progress so rapidly as in our own day. Still it is unaccountable how a sum of this amount could have disappeared, unless upon the supposition that extravagance or monopoly, in some way, either wasted or employed it to other purposes.

The form of the building is oblong; but miserably out of proportion, as the edifice is by far too wide for its length. The church has a square turreted tower, but no bells, as in Old England, to gladden the heart with their merry music. How often have I, as going to and returning from my unsatisfactory duties, yearned to hear sounding forth from St. George's *yet unconsecrated* walls, the changing peals of such Sabbath bells as enliven those whose happiness it is to live within their chimes! The want of even a bell in the church to toll the people to service is only one of those unaccountable omissions, for which indifference to matters of this nature can alone account. Over the east end of the building, where the altar stands, there is an arched window, which for a long time was partially concealed; but, thanks to the good taste of the present surveyors, is now fully restored. It is the only thing in the building deserving notice; and, ornamented with stained glass would have an imposing effect. At

this end of the church, outside, on the angle of it is a stone cross. Formerly there was a round ball, what to signify, no one, except the person who put it there, can say.

The first thing to which my attention was directed on officiating in St. George's, was the Mistake which I discovered in the Decalogue. I perceived that the Seventh and Eighth Commandments were incorrectly placed, the one expressing the obligations of the other. How long this gross error has been permitted to remain uncorrected I cannot tell: but there it is yet, to bear witness to the blindness of eye, as well as heart, which can tolerate in the house of the Most High so palpable a mistake. This would not be seen in any of the Missionary Churches or Chapels. The interior has two central rows of pews, with open benches on the right and left of them, leaving, consequently, a middle and two side aisles; galleries surround three sides of it, but they are unbearably hot and uncomfortable. Nothing can be worse than these appendages to church accommodation in hot climates; nor are they required here, for there is room enough to hold fourteen or fifteen hundred persons with tolerable convenience. An old stomachless hand organ, which would scarcely be observed in a large drawing-room, unless put in the very centre of it, stands in the western gallery.

May these humble remarks lead to better things in these two particulars! As for the windows, which light and ventilate the edifice from the north and south sides, and which are eight in number, they correspond with the taste displayed throughout this commodious but most unsightly looking piece of masonry: without any style, unnecessarily large, and formless, they unite in showing at what a cost the colonial church has been erected; which is, nevertheless, inferior in its *toute ensemble* to those of Regent, or Kent, or that built in the Pademba Road, under the auspices of the Church Missionary. The old desk and pulpit corresponded with everything else until very lately, when new ones were put up; and even these, although a great improvement upon the former, are not worthy of the Government Church of such a rising colony as Sierra Leone. Nearly five years ago a handsome sum was voted by the Council, on my application, for the erection of them. After nearly four years they were sent out, and were then brought into use, having been permitted to season for several months in their unwieldy cases in the church! And what were they after all?—Such as would not have been suffered to have been placed against the walls of the most retired hamlet House of Prayer! The furniture of them, if yet brought to light, must by this time have proved

their power of resisting the encroachments of the moth! However, much has been done, the last two years, to improve St. George's; and if the pews were only re-modelled, and some salutary and necessary alterations made as to their arrangement and method of letting, so as to accommodate the Public Officials according to their rank with seats—titled as they are, for example, in such chapels as you see at Portsmouth—I am persuaded that the Colonial Church would not be so sadly deserted on Sunday, and present such an empty appearance as it now does. The best style of church building for hot countries, so far as my small experience goes, is Christ Church, in New Providence, Bahamas; yet St. George's is, notwithstanding, a conspicuous object; and with its handsome iron palisade, which is fixed on a stone basement, must attract the stranger.

To any one unaccustomed to such congregations as are to be seen in this colony, the sight of those with which we are familiarized in Sierra Leone, would prove imposing. I felt, myself, very odd sensations the first time I did duty at St. George's. Not that I had never ministered before to Natives of Colour, for the most interesting and delightful of my clerical labours have been pursued amongst them in the West Indies. But here I beheld Africa's children—the long-

neglected, injured objects of contempt and cruelty—the once miserable prey of superstition and idolatry—the pitiable slaves to a worse thralldom than relentless, mercenary man could bind them in, the thralldom of their sin-benighted, unillumined souls—and in their *own* land! Here I contemplated them—the emancipated possessors of mental as well as bodily freedom—the conscious participators of Civil and Religious Blessings! And here I found them, not the unwilling or adventurous emigrants *from* their native soil, but the *in*-dwellers of their natural homes—the civilized and devout believers of a nobler creed—the professors of an exalted and heavenly faith, reverentially joining in one of the most sublime rituals which Christianity can boast! Then it was, that the inspiring assurance “God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him,” was revived in all its force in my mind, as the heart-felt Amens of hundreds of Ethiopias’ offspring joined in confessing the truths of the Gospel! That morning will long be remembered by me, when native choristers, with their white surplices, sang with all the correctness and melody of English children; and the duties of clerk and sexton were not less becomingly discharged, because performed by men of a different complexion from ourselves! •

CHAPTER IX.

FREE-TOWN BY MOONLIGHT.—BRIEF ACCOUNT OF KING TOM'S, THE WESLEYAN MISSIONARY ESTABLISHMENT.—THE CHURCH MISSIONARY COLLEGE, AND SOME REMARKS ON EDUCATION.—THE PARTY AT SEA.—A LIVING CHARACTER.—THE CARD-TABLE, AND A PIECE OF GOOD FORTUNE.—SUPPER-TABLE; ELOQUENCE, AND SEPARATION.

It was one of those clear, brilliant nights, for which the tropics only are remarkable. The moon shone, unsullied by the smallest cloud; and by her light not only were the surrounding objects defined with a distinctness almost equal to that of day, but the eye could have traced with ease and accuracy an ordinary sized print; the stars thickly studded the grey-blue sky, whose encircling and rising arch above, reflected them in the still transparent waters which were rocking to and from their moorings vessels of various sizes and different nations, from the proud man-of-war to the long light and buoyant canoe, which sported like a feather on their surface. Not a light was to be seen, save here and there the glimmering of some solitary lamp, fitfully dying away in the forecastle

of a distant ship. A magic-like silence pervaded life and nature, undisturbed except by the playful murmuring of the waves splashing against the rock-bound sands of the coast, or the dull tinkling of a bell, mournfully doling forth from some craft the lateness of the hour.

Directly before, and not more than half a mile from us, lay Free-town, stretching itself parallel with and close upon the beach. On the left, the low, unhealthy shore of Bullom extended itself in a regular line with its stunted bush, nearly buried out of sight by the noxious malaria which enveloped it—an ominous object of dread amidst an otherwise interesting and striking scenery! To the right, at the very extremity of the town, and at a jutting point of the land, which from one position closed in the picture with a gradual curve, King-Tom stood out in bold relief, a spacious and stone building of two stories high. This structure, formerly erected for Government purposes at an enormous expense, has since fallen into the hands of the Wesleyan Mission, who purchased it at an absurdly cheap price, and now use it as a residence for their missionaries, who have a large and well-organized establishment of scholars of the natives, whose system of religious and general instruction can only be duly appreciated by a personal examination of the students. As it rose in the perspec-

tive from the water's edge with its lofty flight of steps, by which the visitor ascends to the noble piazza, that fronts from end to end the main building, the supineness and culpable indifference of the Church establishment to the wants of St. George's, the Colonial Place of Divine and Public Worship, in Externals, as well as other still more important points, (not to mention here the obstacles to its support and advancement, injudiciously, if not inexcusably raised and fostered by those who ought to be foremost in its cause) gave rise to many sad reflections.

Not far from this rose on high the yellow walls of the lofty and gloomy prison to which I have already adverted in a former chapter. Next to the prison were to be seen in the beautiful moonlight the different storehouses and public buildings, successively grouped together in pleasing contrast, and producing a novel and imposing effect. Central and close in the background of the houses, the dull, square turreted tower of St. George's Church was visible, illegally and prematurely sainted, for it has not yet been blessed with consecration ; and perhaps, on this account, regarded with all its adjuncts as lay and not ecclesiastical property. Beyond, and far out-topping this sacred edifice, the hills rose mistily and darkly, forming themselves into bold intersections, and thickly

covered with bush and other kinds of low wood. Midway up these are erected the Barracks, a long range of wooden buildings, surrounded by a parapet wall and buttresses, and, with one solitary and singular exception, which I shall by and bye lay before my readers, enjoying the most healthy and elevated locality. Crowning the whole the rounded top of the steep and craggy Sugar-loaf, with some sister mountains ranged modestly beneath, filled up the distance.

Further to the left, the main-land died softly away in a sinuous form, nearly to a point, diversified by little bays and creeks, and terminating with the white walls of a large and noble building, rising in aristocratic loftiness, three good stories high, as if by enchantment, from the palm-trees which embosom it, and displaying its parapets in the quiet moonlight, like a structure of the fancy which Spenser's pen might not have despised. This building has been completed under the superintendence of the Church Missionary Local Committee, and is devoted to the objects of Native Education for the purpose of supplying teachers and ministers to the colony. Nothing can speak more highly than this college does for the zeal and exertions of an enlightened and Christian country, in the cause of religion and civilization; and I learn that its internal arrangements,

both as to the accommodation of pupils, and the system of instruction, deserve the warmest praise. But as no opportunity has ever been afforded me, in any way, of forming any opinion myself of its advantages from personal inspection, I cannot do more than superficially speak of it. The erection of this edifice, however, has given rise to much conversation on the marked preference which is now bestowed on the African over the European. And the newsmongers of the colony are ready enough to attribute it, as they do most other laudable exertions to elevate the negro race to that intellectual standard of which they are pronounced capable, to the ultimate design of superseding, at any sacrifice of English interest, in all departments, lucrative, speculative, and professional, those who have been the authors of Africa's present advancement and prosperity. Be this as it may, the Subject of Education, as it is conducted and pressed forward now in Sierra Leone, will bear a more serious and practical analysing ; and not lose anything of its importance because tested by the question, whether it is not in too premature and rapid an advance ; and how far, or if at all, a good and noble work may not suffer from a zeal which may be unintentionally overreaching itself.

So much in the rough and brief style, for some of the more striking of the Locals of Free-town, as

seen at this "witching hour of night," and which I gazed upon with all those feelings which such an hour and prospect ever produce in the mind, from the vessel to which a kind invitation had brought me.

The solitude and lateness of the hour had a charm calculated to call forth in the mind, both painful as well as agreeable and even romantic associations; nor is it possible for any one, who has never moved from home and felt the pang of parting from the dearest of earthly treasures to seek in foreign and pestilential climes the means of existence, to realize the sensations which such an hour and scene excite within us! The wifeless childless adventurer cannot guess at those emotions which agitate the breast of a husband and father, whom, at such a time an influence, secret and over-mastering, yet indefinable, sends back in thought to the land of his fathers and the hearth of his domestic joys and hopes!

As I stood thus alone on the deck, musing on the past, and calculating on the doubtful future, a tear was just reminding me, that there were those far off, who, perhaps, at this very instant, were reciprocating such feelings, when a shout from the cabin, loud and long enough to start from their slumbers the whole mass of living humanity

which surrounded us, reminded me of where I was.

I have observed during my wanderings in the West Indies and in Africa, that it is a common practice to celebrate a departure by what is called a "*Turn-out*" on board. In accordance with this rule of society a large party of all sorts had been invited to partake of a supper, which the well-known hospitality and taste of the captain promised to be first-rate. As my object in these sketches of life and manners on the coast is to present a true copy of them, "nothing extenuating, or setting down aught in malice," I shall introduce in these pages the worthy master of the vessel as Captain Ebenezer Playwell. This cognomen may not be in strict classical agreement with the notions of the sons of the New World, but it is worthy of the far-famed and fashionable skipper.

Notwithstanding a peculiar obliquity of vision, and a considerable degree of easy, self-assurance, Playwell appeared to be extremely popular with the blue coats of Jonathan's soil and the Aristocratic Peculiars of Free-town; and this favourable impression towards him could be matter of no surprise to those who were able, as undoubtedly many are in this metropolis of the Coast, to estimate superior manners and graceful style.

Indeed, with all his little amusing peculiarities, excusable in one who had adopted Jonathan's land for his own, Playwell, although of the number of singulars, was in heart a "right sort of fellow." With enough of personal consequence, the never-failing concomitant of a full purse and association with the first circles of society, to insure him a welcome and amuse his friends, he "stood," as people so term it, "well with the world." Such were his versatile powers, that he could put you in danger of your life by provoking your laughter, or compel a sigh of thanksgiving when it was the hour of breaking up! Moreover, he played cards courageously, and yet prudently; betted moderately and seldom lost; would joy to toss with you for the difference in an emergency, and bear any reverse of fortune with the philosophy of a man who was conscious he could spare a trifle in the game of chance. He was to sail the next morning, and this was his farewell entertainment.

The party on this occasion counted as many as could be safely squeezed into a small cabin without danger of suffocation, and was quite *élite*. A merry one, too, it was, but without any of the spirit of the Centaurs and the Lapithæ. The "*rixæ inter pocula*," so injurious to the harmonies of society, disturbed them not; but the most unbounded pleasantry pervaded the meeting. A

more perfect and faithful representation of Bacchus and his children in the innocent enjoyment of the grape could not be drawn by the most fanciful conception! There was a degree of refined moderation—an exhibition of astonishing self-respect, seldom witnessed amongst the votaries of the merry god. Considering the intolerable heat of the weather, proved by the huge drops of perspiration which continually required the cambrics; and making every allowance for a crowded cabin, clouds of smoke steaming forth from Havannahs, the popping of the corks of gooseberry juice, and the draughts of "*harmless*," taken "*inter ludos*" to qualify the acidity of the *nominal* champagne,—the good humour that prevailed, the wit that oozed out ever and anon from the brains of the guests, and the gravity which balanced all the proceedings were really creditable.

Captain Ebenezer was evidently *in* his element, as well as *on* it. Never could he have exhibited his parts and talents for society more effectually than on this felicitous occasion. The superior advantages derivable from intercourse and quiet snug dinner parties with Representatives of Sovereignty never appeared in a more prominent manner than in the easy and ready movements of our friend Playwell. Long will every one who was a guest that night remember the arch smile of his

one eye, which assisted the cross and vacant gaze of the other, and left it a question of difficulty *who* at times was the object of his happy reflections ! This peculiarity of vision in our host was, however, an advantage to his friends ; for if one could not always positively claim a good look as his own, it was as easy a matter to reject an ill one, and transfer it as intended for some other person. But Ebenezer's ocular defect was on the left side of the question ; and this to Jonathan, under such a privation, was of considerable importance, who is too much of the gentleman, in general, to use any weapons *short* of rifles, whenever desirous of ceasing to be a debtor to the flesh ; still, in spite of the acuteness of Ebenezer, an occasional twitching of the leg would remind him, as he was wont good-naturedly to tell me, that he was not the only marksman who could hit a calf !

Now the shout which I have mentioned as having roused me from my reverie had come from the cabin, where, for some hours, amidst noise, and smoke, and humour of various kinds, the company had been closely wedged together amusing themselves at a game of *vingt-un*. It was not simply the signal of preparation for supper, but a demonstration of delight, which Playwell had started at his success in a "*toss-up-affair*" for a gold watch, which Fortune put into his fob for the dollars that

had, contrary to the usual rule, departed out of his pocket. As I entered the cabin, there was Ebenezer, dancing for ecstasy, his right hand waving aloft the valuable prize, and the left instinctively grubbing about in his breeches pocket, as much as to intimate, "Never mind, it's now all right."

It was not long before the *Night Feast* was laid out. Such our supper might truly be called, for it was past one o'clock before we sat down to fulfil the important object of our meeting together. The table was literally crammed with good things: eatables and drinkables vied with each other for numerical superiority. It is wonderful to think (with a little management) how much can be squeezed into a small compass. The tact, no less than the liberality and taste of our friend the Skipper, was most advantageously displayed. Persons who are not practically acquainted with the customs and habits common to Europeans whilst residents in foreign climes, can form no idea of the freedom with which they indulge in the pleasures and gratifications of sense, nor even guess at the cleverness and extravagance which characterize the setting out of the table on such occasions. John Bull is as indomitable in retaining old ways, and as clever in using the means for preserving them with his wonted spirit,—although panting

beneath the rays of an African sun, and liable every twenty-four hours to all the varieties of fever which can be told, from the acclimatizing to that of the black vomit,—as if he were securely domiciled in Old England. Nor can I for a moment suppose that were I to enumerate the liberties Europeans take with themselves in the licentious indulgences to which they are constitutionally, as well as practically too prone, although life itself is the price they pay for such folly, these would be scarcely credited.

Down we all sat with barely room sufficient to use our knives and forks, or handle our glasses. We mustered American, English, Irish, Scotch; Jew and Christian, Inferior and Superior; the Merchant and his more fashionable clerk; Army, Navy, Church and State, Democracy and Theocracy, Republicans and Monarchists, Whigs and Tories. It was an admirable compound of character, a diversity of face form and manners, such as would puzzle the cleverest Bump of order to classify; and I doubt if facetious Punch, with his ogling look of shrewdness and his discriminating pen, would have been able to make up his mind what to choose. A fresh importation of English adventurers had just arrived to try their fortune and their constitutions, so that our party had all the advantages of novelty, and the material for animated and

instructive converse. Although parties of this description in Sierra Leone are not always attended with the most exact conformity to prudence, I have never had any great cause of complaint for a deficiency in those points of decorum and self-restraint when circumstances have required that I should be present; and, indeed, with but one exception—an exception, which had it been made anywhere else but in the society and on the occasion it did, I should not have thought so much of—I have uniformly found the most becoming deference always paid to the ministerial character. A more frequent and extensive intercourse than would be called for, probably, in other societies, is almost compulsory in Sierra Leone; if the clergyman would obtain that insight into, and knowledge of the nature of those propensities and dispositions which actuate mankind, and are biassed by certain influences peculiar alone to such a place and climate. This necessity, however, has its bounds; and can be ventured upon by no one whose years, experience, and constant habits of professional duty have not brought him much in contact with general society. There is a susceptibility indigenous to the residents of that colony, which, like the climate they breathe, is of that temperature, that you must be well acquainted with and thoroughly understand it, to use it to

your advantage. Yet, in this dangerous assay, recollect you expose yourself to a noxious atmosphere, which, without suitable care, may leave its unwholesome effects in your own constitution, whether it be physical or moral.

Captain Ebenezer's entertainment was free from everything which could offend good manners. Cheerfulness and pleasure were not allowed to outstep that boundary line of propriety, which, once passed, leaves nothing to be desired in companionship. The gentlemen of the New World were not wanting in vivacity of conversation and cleverness of repartee; but I did not think them equal, in ease of manner and simplicity of expressing themselves, to the Englishman; certainly not in the rich, spontaneous eloquence of the Irishman when "on his legs" for a speech. Toasting is a *sine quâ non* on all extraordinary "Spreads" in Free-town society; and it is by no means an undesirable auxiliary to the promoting good feeling and quickening people into good humour with one another, so long as the speakers do not indulge too much in the poetic vein, or fancy themselves on the Hustings, or in the House of Lords, or Commons. The speechifying on this occasion was well harmonized. Our Host was all humour in look and language. The American nationalized himself for his prosy sentimentality. Erin lost nothing of her

fame in the classic profusion of her representative; and the Parson, it is to be hoped, did not make the worst, because the shortest, display of oratory, in return for some kind expressions and pretty compliments!

CHAPTER X.

THE SLAVERY QUESTION MOOTED.—CONSEQUENCES OF THE ATTEMPTS TO ABOLISH SLAVERY NOT SUFFICIENTLY EXAMINED IN DETAIL.—THE PRESENT SYSTEM IN USE TO SUPPRESS IT PRODUCTIVE OF INCREASED SUFFERINGS TO THE SLAVES.—INDUCEMENTS TO THE TRADE THE SAME.—INCREASED MISERY TO THE SLAVES WHEN THEIR CAPTORS ARE PURSUED.—THEIR ILL-TREATMENT BEFORE BEING SHIPPED.—SLAVERY CARRIED ON IN FREE-TOWN, OR ITS VICINITY.—PROOFS OF THIS FACT.—THE SUCCESS OF THE INTERVENTION SYSTEM BUT PARTIAL.—THIS PROVED FROM THE CHANCES OF ESCAPE.—ANECDOTE OF A SUCCESSFUL STRATAGEM IN EVADING CAPTURE.—PROPOSED MEANS OF ABOLISHING THE SLAVE TRADE.—INTERESTING RECOGNITION OF A BROTHER BY A YOUNG SLAVE BROUGHT INTO FREE-TOWN.—ADJUDICATION SYSTEM CONSIDERED.—ILLCIT ATTEMPTS TO DISSUADE FROM EMIGRATION.—CLOSING REMARKS.

ALTHOUGH the Philanthropist and Politician naturally look, and with reason, for something like a commensurate return for the efforts they have made in the cause of humanity and civilization, it is not always to follow, as matter of course, that those efforts will be answered by proportionate results. This would be contrary to all past ex-

perience and at variance with those principles by which this world has been, and is to be governed, so long as it exists. At the same time, a country which has made such sacrifices as England has done in the cause of Africa, has not only a right but is bound in duty to inquire, *what, in general*, has been the consequence of that devoted concern which she has so untiringly evinced in behalf of her colony of Sierra Leone—a concern which can only be appreciated by the consideration of the immense sums she has expended, and the valuable life she has dedicated at the shrine of Liberty. In the all-absorbing subject of Negro Emancipation, the public sagacity and inquisitiveness have appeared to fail themselves, in a singular manner, in this way. Giving themselves up, in the zeal and enthusiasm of a just cause, to the consideration of the *broad fact* of this monstrous social and moral evil, they have incautiously, and, perhaps, to its disadvantage, bestowed but little attention in the inquiry, how *that machinery*, which they have employed, has worked *in process* in abolishing the iniquitous trade: and what have been its *difficulties* and most *serious drawbacks*? More than this: the *general influences* arising out of these exertions, on the religious, social, and intellectual, condition of the Negro Race have been either disregarded from want

of having the attention called to them, or from that overmastering anxiety about the suppression of a cruel traffic, which meritoriously but not wisely has passed over matters secondary, may be allowed as parts of one grand object designed in the labours of a Wilberforce and a Buxton.

Years have now passed since Wilberforce first roused the sympathies of the British nation, and by his truthful eloquence made the iniquitous slave trade the subject of parliamentary discussion. Against an opposition combining powerful interest, and commanding great talent, Justice and Humanity prevailed. The question of the lawfulness of a trade, the most cruel and unnatural, ceased to be entertained; and Freedom waved her banner over the western coast of Africa. What has been the result? Has it not been fairly proved by the consequences which have attended *the process* pursued to put down the evil, that it is one thing to condemn a principle and denounce it by a legislative enactment, but altogether another to exterminate it? Theoretically the provision to abolish slavery was good: in practice it has tended to increase the sufferings and ill-usage of the enslaved, although it has assisted to put some check upon it,

and emancipate a few thousands. All that has been said or conceived with respect to the multiplied miseries of the slaves under the Intervention system must fail to convey an adequate idea of their aggravated woes. The Inducements to carry on the slave trade, moreover, have not been removed nor diminished by the method hitherto put in practice; and the frequent captures which are made may assist to prove this. Both the demand for and the value of the slave is the same, if not greater from the very circumstance of the difficulties presented to the customary supply of the market. If a certain number of labourers have always been able to ensure employment, and their services considered both indispensable and rateable at a high price, the total withdrawal of this supply, or the attempt to withhold it, will only serve to stimulate to fresh and increased efforts to procure, at any feasible price and moderate risk what holds out the promise of a profitable return. But when the means of obtaining such property has been formally condemned, and certain penalties affixed to the use of them; when those penalties do not involve a sacrifice which the adventurers in such an occupation are not unwilling to concede, the conclusion is, to my mind, easy to be formed. They will hazard the *possibilities* and

probabilities for the odds, which, in a case of one successful attempt out of many failures will reward them with a more than compensatory prize. In this illegal pursuit of an illegal object their own interest must suggest to them a course of action and policy, calculated as much as possible to facilitate expedition, secure escape, and make the most of these opportunities ; and this cannot be done without entailing additional misery upon the slaves who are the unhappy objects of two opposite and contending principles,—a christian philanthropy, and unchristian traffic. Those persons whose profession and the nature of whose duties bring them continually in contact with slavers, can alone form an idea of the severities which the slaves undergo from their captors in the diabolical schemes employed by them to ship and get off safely with their cargo. The same manœuvring which is employed to circumvent and surprise the slaver will be used by those who have everything to hope for by escape but nothing except loss to expect in being captured. To stow away, therefore, as closely as they can, and as many of their victims in a low-roofed, narrow, close hold, with scarcely air to breathe, or light to see ; to conceal them, as much as possible, and to avoid, to the utmost of their power, every appearance of suspicion ; to guard

against any rising or attempt at self-deliverance, by the severest restraint, will, necessarily, be the policy of the Slave-dealer. Nor is this the only wretchedness to which the Intervention System subjects these poor wretches. Life is not always held so dear or sacred, that it does not fall a sacrifice to that plausible necessity, ever ready to the hands of the slave-dealer, which can reconcile the most barbarous and wholesale murder of hundreds of human beings, to serve its inhuman purpose. But not only are the slaves subject to greater suffering from these causes, when fairly shipped and out at sea, but they have, as may easily be inferred, no small share of misery to undergo before they are put on board. The means necessary to aid those of the natives, who either openly and systematically, or less overtly, supply the victims, forbid much commiseration or gentle treatment; and their hard-hearted countrymen are not, in their own natures, disposed to show much pity. Whether, consequently, the slaves be obtained by forcible seizure, or through native agency,—and this latter instrumentality there is cause for believing is more in operation than might be supposed,—the fact of the Intervention plan increasing, unavoidably, the horrors of the Slave-trade cannot be doubted.

Perhaps it has never occurred to those, whose

sole acquaintance with this interesting subject is made on the information supplied to them from the statistical reports of the day, and whose ideas of the slave trade in its working may lead them to think it is only on those parts of the coast unprotected by the immediate interference of a resident and watchful government, that encouragement might be given to the barterer in human flesh and blood to carry on this forbidden traffic in places where there seemed to be the least practical possibility of escaping discovery, and where, if detected, a most severe punishment would be inflicted upon the offender. But, oh, Philanthropist, or Politician, whatever you may allow yourself to believe touching this matter,

“ There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”

In defiance of your prohibitions, your penalties, your blockade; in contempt of your advancing civilization and the sweets of freedom which are now understood and appreciated by thousands of your emancipated slaves in the very metropolis of Sierra Leone—in Free-town—where long-insulted, long-lamented Liberty might be supposed to watch over with jealous eye and suspicious vigilance her privileges, so dearly and hardly obtained; in the midst of objects continually reviving the memory of past miseries which slavery

wrought upon its victims ; and on a spot of Africa's soil, most blessed and favoured by the gifts of education and religion, her own people, her delivered children, themselves enjoying the inestimable boon of civil freedom, are desecrating her Fane and putting the fetter on their own flesh and blood. It would not be strange should any one doubt so monstrous a perversion of the most precious of all human rights and immunities, so unpardonable a misapplication of such a treasure, were it not confirmed by evidence, "strong as holy writ." It is a well-known and admitted fact, that Mandingos, an African tribe, are in the practice of obtaining and carrying off *liberated slaves* from Free-town or its neighbourhood ; and that a regular understanding is kept up between the parties (natives of course) for the prosecution of this wicked work. The Mandingos bring rice or other articles for sale ; the commodity, whatever it may be, is disposed of ; by what allurements and contrivances I presume not to explain, the ill-fated victims, by some device, are disposed of in the boat ; and redress and deliverance are out of the question : for only the interested villains are cognizant of what is transpiring. An affecting story, undeniably true in its main features, will prove that such abuses do exist. An individual well-known in Free-town went to one of

the islands, and there met with a young girl who had been emancipated from slavery, and having quitted the Liberated African Yard, was, after some time, smuggled away from the colony and disposed of for a slave, in which condition she was found. She mentioned her situation to the above individual, and besought him to take up her case and get her once more set free.

Another very remarkable and well-authenticated fact will corroborate what I have said of the secret encouragement which is given to the Slave-Trade by Natives, and those, too, whom the British Public would scarcely credit for conniving at a traffic which has entailed so much misery on themselves. This case will further point out how cautious we should be to guard our sympathies by a watchful care, lest an untempered zeal and over-confiding generosity suffer the advocates of a just and Christian cause to be beguiled into a misplaced belief of African merit by African duplicity and cunning. The truth is, and it may be spoken without any injury to the interests of Negro Emancipation, that such is the infatuation of some well-meaning but not very judicious men, that you have only to place before them a Black face and make out a case of African distress, than Mr. and Mrs., or Master and Miss Sambo's fortune is immediately realized. In England, a case of distress,

oppression, or cruelty has to go the round of the newspapers, to submit to the strictest and most tedious inquiry, and withal to be of such an aggravated character as to provoke an interest for the sufferer, before it will be even deemed worth a thought. So much for the happiness of being born with a sable complexion !

Some few years since, an officer in the navy on service on the coast had sufficient grounds, as he believed, to suspect that the Slave-Trade was carried on to a considerable extent on some particular part of it. He directed his attention there accordingly, destroyed the Baracoons, and took such additional measures as he considered necessary and legitimate to suppress the Trade, — in which he succeeded. But an action was brought against him, and from some difficulties in the onset of the business in procuring witnesses to prove that he was justified in what he did, he was obliged to return to England to vindicate his measures. A black woman, of the name of Trinorman, came forward at last to give evidence in his behalf, and her testimony settled the case in his favour. For the service thus rendered to the Emancipation Cause by this dark damsel, she became an object of interest in London, the attraction at all Anti-slavery Meetings, the favourite of a blind admiration, praises and presents seemed to be at rivalry

which should be most forward and munificent in conferring their gifts upon her, and she returned to her native land carrying away with her the most substantial proofs of John Bull's simple good-nature. But, what then? One day, and not many months since, a poor African child was taken to the Police Court in Free-town in a most pitiable state. Her back and arms were dreadfully lacerated by severe flogging which she had suffered. Fear withheld her from telling where she originally came from, and who her parents were. She was handed over, therefore, to the kind protection of an honest countryman who volunteered to take care of her. Not long after, a native woman, handsomely dressed, and ornamented with a profusion of trinkets, made application in a very independent manner, for the restoration to her of a child who had left her, and whom she had subsequently discovered. It was the poor little destitute African girl! The applicant was closely interrogated; the child also was now induced to tell her tale, and to the horror of every one present, Trinorman stood before the seat of justice—a Self-convicted Slave-dealer!

A war in the Sherbro country had led to the capture of a native inhabitant of that place, together with his wife and child. Trinorman, in opposition to the supplications of the distressed parents, bought

and carried the young living booty off with another slave. When reproved for her shameful behaviour towards the child, she boasted of and vindicated herself in her deed of cruelty, said she had a right to beat the girl, which belonged to her, and would do it again. But the poor victim was spared any further bad treatment, for she was left with her generous protector. Such was the ungrateful return of an artful, plausible "Mammee" of the Western coast for the kindness she had received from British philanthropy! Is it not a lesson which may serve to teach the necessity of not suffering our humanity to lead us into a credulity and weakness which rather injure than promote the objects of Christian benevolence!

It is not long ago that a woman in Free-town was accused of dealing in slaves and put upon her examination for the alleged offence. The guilt was brought home to her in the most conclusive manner; but some difficulty arose about the legality of her recognition and liability to English jurisdiction, and she unfortunately escaped that recompence which she so justly merited. Many years since a native was also convicted of the same crime, and sentenced to perpetual imprisonment; but he made his escape, it is supposed with the connivance of those who had the care of him; and report says he afterwards continued to carry on

with impunity in another part of the colony his iniquitous business.

"Nimium ne crede colori."

That the grand purpose of all those exertions which have been called forth into action with a view of utterly destroying the abominable trade, has not succeeded but only partially suppressed it must be admitted; the successful efforts of some of the speculators in the trade in eluding and occasionally getting clear away from their pursuers are evidence of this; and, indeed, to what extent these successful efforts are carried, and how large a supply of slaves may not be continually in readiness for exportation in parts of the coast scarcely accessible and open to inspection, it is impossible to estimate. I have heard from an officer a very singular account of a stratagem employed, and with good luck to the party who were engaged in the trade. His story was this, as nearly as I can remember:

A fine vessel, commanded and owned by a man who had been either dismissed, or obliged to volunteer his own dismissal from the navy on account of a crime with which he had been charged, lay in a bight off the coast, intended, there was no doubt, for the conveyance of slaves. It was very well known that the captain was engaged in the

forbidden traffic; but he was too wary either to allow himself to be caught in the fact, or to give the slightest chance to the men-of-war who were on the look out for him and his tempting craft. She was boarded and rigorously examined; but it was not intended that so pretty a prize should at that time fall into the hands of our gallant tars. The captain of the vessel was always sufficiently out of the way to avoid painful contingencies; but he did not forget, slave dealer as he was, that generous liberality and open-hearted good nature which are ever ready, and pleased to give of the best of whatever Jack may have. Accordingly he notified, in the most polite manner possible, to her Majesty's servants, that, notwithstanding it was not in his power personally to attend upon them and do the honours of the table, yet there would be provided for them of the best of everything he had. The officers found him as good as his word; the table was always laid out in the first style, and supplied with the choicest of wines and most *recherché* of delicacies;—champagne and claret were at their disposal; and the furniture of the table was, in all particulars, equal in quality to the provision. Well, this in itself was an agreeable adventure; but the capture was the thing—it was too tantalizing to see that self-condemned craft

riding at anchor, yet not tangible ; and their host, her captain, doing the gentleman in this cool, easy manner. However, what was to be done ? the sequel will explain. Whilst thus cleverly and unsuspectingly engaging the attention and keeping up the expectation of his friends, the men-of-war, the scheming slave dealer was unmolestedly and successfully in another snug retreat of the land, not very far distant, loading another vessel with his human merchandize ! Verily, in this instance, the “ biter was bit.”

“ It is in vain
(I see) to argue 'gainst the grain,
Or, like the stars, incline men to
What they're averse themselves to do :
For when disputes are wearied out,
'Tis interest still resolves the doubt—”

The humorous poet's truism may be applied with the strictest propriety to the existing method of endeavouring to abolish the Slave-Trade. Certain it is that, hitherto, neither eloquence nor argument has succeeded in convincing the men who follow it of its iniquity, nor prevailed upon them to abandon it altogether ;—the reasons are obvious : the inadequacy of the instrumentality to triumph over the reaction and counter efforts which self-interest will, regardless of all opposition, put forth and employ so long as the chances against it in-

volve not too serious a sacrifice. To forfeit all his property, to lose his civic rights, to become disqualified for any public employment, or even to undergo imprisonment for life, are, it is plain, coercive measures which have been found too powerless to restrain the slave-dealer. To let the evil work out its own destruction by an overstocked market, and to tolerate the traffic under certain regulations, might diminish its severities and deteriorate it in importance as a matter of gain, but it would not tend to its complete overthrow; and, then, this would be in direct opposition to what has always been and is still maintained, that as an abstract principle, it is contrary to every law of right, and repugnant to humanity, justice, and the Divine will.

So much has been advanced and so ably, to hold up to public view and execration the barter of human beings; so many corroborative facts have been adduced to prove the horrors which attend it and the means of its prevention; such numerous suggestions have been offered for the abolition of slavery, all purporting a less objectionable or more practicable way of putting a stop to it, yet in vain, that, humanly speaking, the Cause of Mercy and Philanthropy would seem to be hopeless. More sober and serious views of the matter will teach us that this is far from being the case. A cause is not

the less certain of ultimate triumph because its progress may be slow and retarded by circumstances which human foresight may not see, and human power be unable at once to control or command. The complete deliverance of Africa's race from the oppression of an inhuman tyranny, is not merely the cause of man but of Heaven.

To wait for the consummation of this desirable object until Missionary influence, and Christian civilization, and the advantages of commerce, and a clear insight into the superior and more beneficial resources of honourable and lucrative trade, shall have taught the native slave-dealer that his own industry and local opportunities for aggrandizing wealth and securing independence will reward him in a pecuniary return tenfold more satisfactorily than his living booty, is too tedious a process for the exigences of the case. It does not answer to procrastinate a cure, if it be attainable, however severe the operation may be, by direct and prompt measures. A sacrifice, terrible as it may be, if it crushes at once the hydra monster, and thus spares millions of unhappy beings years of agonizing tortures and suspense, is better than a squeamish pity which hesitates to give over to the executioner a dozen cold-blooded, speculating, systematic murderers. Let a penal statute come forth from the tribunal of this country ; and let

all other states who participate in the same noble feelings with it, affix their seals to the deed, that, Chief or Bushman, Man or Woman, Native or European, Buyer or Seller, Death by the common hangman shall be the unalterable penalty, on the spot of detection; and the cry of bondage will soon cease to be heard, and the mark of the fetters disappear. Make Slavery—Piracy! Punish it as such; and the fine fellows in our navy will have (I should say much to their satisfaction), a less disagreeable, and perhaps nobler work to engage them in, than for months, or years to play at “hide and seek” off the deadly shores of the Western Coast of Africa.

Many very affecting little histories, no doubt, might be related of those of our poor fellow-men who are brought into Free-town under the protection of the British flag. One interesting incident occurred whilst I was in the colony, which is extremely touching. A cargo of slaves had arrived, and after the usual preliminary duties had been discharged, they were consigned over to the place appropriated for their reception, the African Yard. A selection of them had been made for recruits, when by some singular coincidence it was found out that one of the young lads, who had been enlisted, had a brother in the Reverend Mr. Peyton’s School. The youth was about fifteen

years old, of manly bearing and prepossessing appearance. His name was Mandarikan, and his father a native chief. His brother at the grammar school in Free-town having obtained intelligence of the arrival of several boys from the place where himself was born, and led by more than curiosity, as we may judge from the circumstances, went to the barracks during the hour of recreation, and identified his enlisted relative. The fact of their relationship was soon proved by the family marks; for every family is able to ascertain its consanguinity by the impressions which are made for that purpose on some part of the body. This poor lad had been captured and re-captured several times, and at last found his way to Sierra Leone in a Brazilian slaver, which was taken off the coast. The discovery soon became a subject of exciting interest; to no one more than my worthy friend Mr. Peyton, except the parties immediately interested. Their emotions were best known to themselves; but their unexpected restoration to each other called forth a scene, that could the hard-hearted, mercenary spoilers of domestic peace and affection have witnessed, they must have been more than men, or worse than fiends, not to have beheld with remorse and self-reproach. Mr. Peyton lost no time in making the circumstances known to the officer commanding the garrison; and

the lad, to the mutual delight and happiness of both brothers, through the exertions of the Commandant, was discharged and restored to his bereaved and disconsolate father.

It is not necessary for me to say that the arrival of a slaver in harbour is to most of us in Free-town an occurrence hailed with satisfaction. To observe the delight which lightens up the countenances of the emancipated victims of man's cruelty, and hear the shouts which welcome them on their landing, fills one with emotions which partake of all the exciting circumstances of a great moral victory. Then

"Soon from the bay, the mingling crowd ascends,
Kindred first met ; by sacred instinct friends."

The slave vessels are easily distinguished from others by their build, being made for swiftness ; and their raking masts tell the character and business of these craft, some of which are very beautiful. After the health officer has visited the slaver and reported of their state, the emigration agent goes on board, and the living cargo is soon disposed of in the Liberated African Yard, where they are comfortably cared for and looked after. The females are placed in a ward separated from that of the men. In the yard is a large open shed, under which is the cooking apparatus, where the

negroes prepare their food. In my visits to the gaol I have often watched these wild men, for most of them are no better when they first enter the yard, from the window which overlooks that department; and a complete picture of savages they present. The whole scene, in fact, is striking, and calculated to awaken many painful reflections. Uncivilized, uneducated, and ignorant of the great purposes of their creation, these untutored barbarians teach a mortifying lesson to man, and serve to humble him who is so ready to exalt himself in his superiority of intellect and knowledge.

“To what base uses we may return, Horatio!”

To look at these creatures, almost unclad, exhibiting as they do such frightful models of the human figure; so irrational in their talk and gestures; so apish in their laughter; so fierce in their expressions of anger and resentment; many of them having their heads shaved, and handling their food which they devour with as much of the restless action of that irrational animal which is the Burlesque of their nature,—leaves a sad impression upon the mind of the humiliating effects of Sin. And then the immense fire and huge cauldrons full of their rice and messing, which you may see them stirring about with long sticks, and the large casks or tubs out of which they feed!

These need be seen but once to be long remembered.

As soon as conveniently can be after the disposal of the slaves the case of the seizure is examined and adjudicated; but there are some inconveniences in the present mode of inquiry, which, perhaps, might be advantageously removed by changing it. Instead of adjudicating, as is now done, in Free-town, why not transfer that duty to the West Indies, or else have a Hulk for the especial purpose set apart in the harbour for the reception of liberated slaves, where they should remain until the usual proceedings in such cases were terminated. This plan would help to remedy the evil, which is almost unavoidable in the present method, and arises out of the opportunities which, notwithstanding all the care taken to prevent it, are afforded to interested natives in the place, of dissuading the Africans from emigrating. Very proper precautions are already used, and a good look-out kept to check as much as possible all unnecessary intercourse between the liberated slaves in the yard and their countrymen without it, that no unfair and undue influence may be employed to prejudice the former against emigrating. But some communication will occasionally and unavoidably happen.

It is positively ascertained that the chief mo-

tive for thus trying to create an aversion, in the minds of the imported Africans, to going to the West Indies is purely a selfish one. Assuming the character of friends, and pretending much pity for their countrymen, they endeavour to fill their minds with the most erroneous conceptions and distorted views of the wise and benevolent purposes contemplated for their good in Emigration, in order that they may themselves enjoy the benefit of the liberated Slave's labours in cultivating their patches of ground, or farms, for which purpose they artfully get them located with them. But whoever rightly understands the importance of the Emigration system, and its necessity, will sincerely regret that anything should be said or done to prejudice these people against a policy which their own interest, the prosperity of the West Indian plantations, and the overflowing population of the colony, cannot but recommend and approve to every sensible and reflective judgment.

These observations on a subject so rife with interest and importance in all its bearings to society, and involving as it does the civil and religious immunities of millions of our fellow men, are recorded with the utmost deference to the various opinions and conclusions to which others more competent to investigate and judge of it have arrived. They only appear in this work as consi-

derations which, at times, have been given to the Slavery question, so far as it has casually presented itself to me, or been started by some fortuitous circumstance in my daily walk of duty, without any original intention of publication. That the Intervention or blockading Plan of putting down the traffic in slaves has compassed much towards its Abolition, the Reports must convince every one who reads them, notwithstanding its success has been but partial. It may ultimately effect the suppression of slavery; this, however, remains to be seen : one fact is unequivocally true, that the greatest hope of the friends of Anti-slavery is in *preventing*, as much as possible, the *Embarkation* of the cargo. More attention to this will better assist to destroy the system than all the other operations of the blockade; for it is attacking the enemy the nearest to his stronghold, and throwing obstacles in the way of the slave-traders, which they cannot soon or easily surmount.

Altogether to remove the blockade from the Western coast, as a few would propose to do, is impracticable; and, moreover, it would be attended with consequences injurious in many ways to those various interests, more or less arising out of the primary questions, and intimately associated with the continuance of the Squadron, which it would be impolicy and injustice not to hold sacred. Con-

siderable importance is given to the fact of establishing legitimate Trade as a mean of neutralizing slavery; and, undoubtedly, it is a powerful one, as the Nunes and Gallinas prove by their abandonment of the trade, and the promise they hold out of rapid improvement in their social and moral being, since they have relinquished the iniquitous business. And it is gratifying to think, amidst all the disheartening impediments and slow progress of universal Emancipation, that Slave Factories and Barracoons (the buildings used in the slave-trade for security of the Slaves) are disappearing before the energies of British humanity; and, as a natural result, local Trade and Commerce gradually and smilingly superseding the terror and desolation which the Chain and the Scourge once caused throughout those countries.

CHAPTER XI.

IMPOSING EFFECT FROM THE FRUIT-TREES ABOUT THE TOWN.—
UNHEALTHINESS FROM NUMEROUS SMALL LOTS AND OVER-
GROWN SUCCULENTS ; PROPOSED REMEDY.—FILTHY HABITS
OF NATIVES, AND NECESSITY OF STRICT REGULATIONS
FOR OBSERVANCE OF CLEANLINESS.—DILAPIDATED HOUSES.—
STORES AND GROG-SHOPS.—MELANCHOLY EXAMPLES OF THE
EFFECTS OF DRAM-DRINKING. — TO WHAT EXTENT INTEM-
PERATE HABITS PREVAIL.—MOST FREQUENT AND FATAL WITH
ENGLISH MERCHANT SAILORS.—FATAL CASE OF THE CAPTAIN
WITH WHOM I FIRST SAILED TO SIERRA LEONE.—TOTAL
ABSTINENCE FROM ANY FERMENTED LIQUORS NOT PRUDENT
IN SUCH A CLIMATE AS SIERRA LEONE.

IN stating how much the general appearance of Free-town is calculated, at first sight, to delight the stranger by impressing him with ideas of the picturesque, there is one feature in it which is very uncommon, and it is the pleasing intermixture of fruit-trees which so beautifully diversifies the prospect. The graceful tamarind and the luscious orange; the refreshing lime and the plummy cocoa-nut tree, alternately rear their heads from between house and hut, and store and chapel, and make a variety which fails not to captivate the

imagination; nor would the plantains and banana trees, notwithstanding their generally slovenly appearance, be without their effect, for their leaves are exquisitely rich and graceful before they part asunder, which they do almost immediately after they are fully formed; unless they have been allowed to overgrow themselves. Imposing, however, as the town is rendered by the rural character thus given to it, the Succulents have been suffered to increase beyond what health would safely admit. A sad want of oversight is perceptible in having allowed so many lots of ground to be occupied, as they are, with wretched huts, whose inmates are not of the best class of persons. These patches of land are not only objectionable from their smallness, but the population they unavoidably induce to huddle together. And their natural habits of uncleanness, which are too gross to mention, together with the want of a free circulation of air, which the numerous Bananas seriously impede, render it almost imperative that some clearance of these enemies to health, pleasing as they may be to the eye, should be made. But, as sufferance has given a kind of prescriptive right to their owners, who are, for the most part, indigent; and the destruction of their fruit-trees, which produce them a little support, would be a harsh and unjust measure without some little re-

muneration, I do not see why the local authorities, aided by public liberality in a matter so greatly affecting the salubrity of the town, could not raise a sum sufficient to recompense the possessors for their loss: and thus all parties might be benefited. That individual considerations should yield to the general good is sound policy, if it does not encroach upon personal right; but any attempt to make an indiscriminate destruction of the fruit-trees, without making up to the poor proprietors some equivalent for their loss, would be a cruel spoliation.

The Banana trees, and like esculents, might be considerably thinned, perhaps, without destroying them altogether: the fruit-trees of larger growth allowed to remain, but kept well trimmed. The yards might be periodically inspected, and where any neglect should be discovered, there a fine imposed on every one, which should be applied to some public work. The Lots should be kept free from all decayed vegetable matter and other rubbish, which should be removed to such spots as might be marked out for the purpose. The native indolence and disregard of cleanliness—common to those who reside in the huts built on these portions of the town—are well known to every one in the colony; their indelicate practices and want of all decorum in their domestic

habits call for a rigorous interference to do away with nuisances which pervade these places. No one who is not practically acquainted with the purlieus and worst parts of the town can form a correct idea of the disgusting and horrible filth which is allowed to be cast there and accumulate; and no expense would be too great which could relieve the town of these the most inducing causes to sickness.

Another singular characteristic in the appearance of Free-town are the old dilapidated houses, and ruins of what once were buildings, and which are to be seen scattered here and there about it. Property of this description, if neglected, or not well looked after, soon falls into decay; and if the removal of these could be effected, or others raised in their place, health and convenience would be thereby promoted. The tottering walls and roofless edifices, the windowless rooms and bare piazzas, the ruins themselves blackened by time and weather, with the yards overgrown with rank weeds and grass, bespeak desolation, and break the charm which otherwise would prevail over Free-town.

The stores, or shops, which are numerous enough, and of themselves proofs of the increasing prosperity of trade, are well supplied with a variety of articles, which are sold at a high per

centage. The assortment of goods comprises fancy as well as substantial things, from the school-boy's toy and infant's rattle, to the draper's bale, or some more valuable merchandise. And these houses of business would appear to greater advantage, were it not for the Grog-shops, which, unhappily, for the health and morals of the community, as well as individual well-doing, exceed the demands of necessity or prudence. The number of them, and the encouragement which their frequent visitors prove they receive, must be a subject of sincere regret, as productive of a serious grievance, and holding out the worst kind of temptation to the use of spirits, not, generally, of the best quality, and often made more deleterious from the artificial means used to give additional strength to such stimulants. For the Dram-drinker, not satisfied with the ordinary power of the inflaming poison, from habitual indulgence of it, requires a hotter fire to satisfy the cravings of that incurable thirst, which, like a canker, is feeding upon his vitals. What wonder, when the sale of this article returns to the vender the enriching profit it does ! Then, the easy, idle life of the doler out of this deadly narcotic of the soul—the unlaborious effort of moving from the chair to the counter, from the counter to the shelf, where, ranged in rows, the bottles stand to be removed from where it would

be well for soul and body if they stood for ever ! Would you find a careless doting fellow of a policeman out of his beat and where he had no business to be—go to the Grog-shop ! Is your servant absent, when you want him, or are you obliged to sit up and open the door for him ; if you would know the true cause for this irregularity—go to the Grog-shop ! Are you annoyed with a female neighbour, more quarrelsome and noisy than ordinarily, and enjoy a few hours reprieve from her litigious wrangling—thanks to the Grog-shop ! Is anything wanting to provoke the inclination, already disposed for vice or crime, to the height of sinful delirium, necessary to madden the heart and arm to deeds of iniquity—go to the Grog-shop ! These African Pot-houses do unspeakable and irremediable mischief to the best interests of society ; and it would be an event hailed with grateful thanks by every sincere friend to the prosperity, temporal and spiritual, of the colony, if these holes of abomination were reduced in number, or some other method, such as a local tax, sufficient to make the article less attainable, adopted, which might check the propensity of a certain class to ruin themselves by this self-murder.

Of the cases which serve to show the dreadful consequences which follow the indulgence of this

destructive habit, the most painful living instance of it that I saw before coming home, was that of a man who was at one time very respectable and comfortably established in Free-town; half fool, half knave, destitute of the most common necessities of life, he lives no one knows how, except on the bounty of the charitable. He contrives by his annoying liberties and half-witted familiarity to ingratiate and intrude himself almost every where; and to save themselves from his ill-timed visits, or more vexatious abuse, people give the miserable wretch, I suppose, either food or raiment, and thus he ekes out a life which no one can envy. You may see him strutting about with a stick, or cane, tolerably well dressed, and occasionally stopping in the road to await some object of his displeasure, whom he will interrupt and salute, eyeing him with no agreeable expression of countenance. Or he will halt opposite your house and address you, whether visible or not; and, if conscious, for he is a very knowing sort of madman, that he may take a liberty, he will in his crazy boldness find his way to your piazza or sitting-room. He then becomes a queer customer, and it is not easy to displace him. The only chance of getting clear of him, if you are not fearful of provoking him to future annoyance, is to tell him he has been to Kissy Hospital; and you will drive

him from you, bestowing on you for your compliment a most disagreeable kind of benediction.

So much for a visit too often to the Grog-shop!

I remember giving this poor creature woeful offence, but undesignedly, before his history was familiar to me, for which he ever after marked me out as an object of dislike. I was calling at a friend's, where he had intruded himself and taken his station on the steps at the door. I wanted a pencil to write my name on a card, and he handed me one. He was at the time well dressed, and had the appearance of a sailor. "You don't seem to know me," he said, sticking his cane under his arm, and monopolizing nearly the whole of the door-way. I did not. "Umph! umph!" he muttered, and gave me one of his wild, vacant stares; "Not know me? Didn't you see me on board when you went last time to England?" A thought came across my mind. "Yes, I recollect." "Ah, ah!" he chuckled out, and would have paid me the compliment of a shake of the hand. Without wishing to hurt his feelings, I declined the honour, for something struck me that was odd about him. Suddenly he snatched the pencil from me, held up his cane and hastily took himself off. I observed the servants laugh, and soon learnt his tale. He never forgot my want of manners, but would even stop at the outside of the

church doors, for they are always open during service, make his usual salutation of "Umph!—umph!" loud enough to be heard, and shaking his cane at me, stalk off.

Other more distressing and fatal instances of dram-drinking might be told, but this possesses something painfully singular about it. The prostration of intellect, such as was portrayed in this case by such a cause, always affected me more than the death of a drunkard, frightful as it is when preceded and brought about by *delirium tremens*.

As to the prevalence of intemperate habits in Free-town I can scarcely venture a positive opinion; but, considering the inducements to them, which climate, society, and the general mode of life afford, I should say it is less than might be expected. Such cases of desperate drinking, however, as do occur, I believe I am correct in saying, are to be found amongst Europeans, and very seldom to be traced to the coloured people, or natives. Amongst the latter, the sottish, tippling system is more common; and this, again, in the lower grades of society. Some slight excesses may occasionally happen in the better circles of the community; but these are comparatively few, and seldom occur, except on some public occasions. It is not fashionable, neither a recommendation to favour,

to indulge at the table ; and this is saying a great deal for such a place as Sierra Leone.

The class of persons most affected by the temptations thrown in their way to follow after strong drink, are the English merchant sailors, and those people whose business attaches them to European traders in general. Amongst these it is that the deadly mischief most extensively and fatally spreads itself. Glad to get ashore, free from nearly all restraint, and wild with the pleasure of liberty, after having been pent up in the small compass of a vessel for weeks, they fly to the Grog-shop ; and the unhappy passion for drink, so inherent in Englishmen, thus left to its own uninterrupted course, is more insatiate in self-gratification from the very fact of its previous subjection to some degree of control, and is not long in hastening its victim to a premature grave. It is melancholy to think, how these poor fellows, whilst under the baneful influence of the liquor, are exposed to the remorseless pilferings of the lodging-house keepers, or the destructive dews, and malaria which infects the air at night. I myself have seen them sleeping as unconcernedly as if in their hammocks, on the damp grass, under some old piazza, or on the steps of a door-way. Jack is, without doubt, in all his grades and doings, a very odd creature. I have not been able some-

times to refrain from laughing to see him in his cups, recognize an old acquaintance, although in the person of Sambo, and hug and kiss him with the most ridiculous, yet original humour. Nor is he very scrupulous as to a black courtship at such seasons, which he will carry on with the most absurd imitation of polite manners. O that no worse results accrued to poor Jack's imprudence than his harmless merriment and jocoseness, or, that he knew the invaluable rule of moderation! But it is not so; and the grave, without so much as a wooden memorial, and its two solitary letters—the initials of his name—to tell where he lies, is too often the end of his story upon earth.

Almost immediately after my arrival in the colony, I was shocked at being called upon to read the burial service over the remains of the captain of the Soundraporvy. He was a husband and a father, and kind good-heartedness was a prevailing ingredient of his character! But misfortune and sorrow had instilled a melancholy into his thoughts and feelings, and he deliberately took to the too common course of minds which can discover no relief for affliction in the consolations of Christianity, that of self-destruction by stimulants. His Consignee, who was very kind to him, missed him one Sunday morning at the breakfast-

table; the following day he found him on board, in an advanced state of mental excitement—yet sensible enough to declare his misery, and wish to die. At the request of the former I went on board, a day or two afterwards, and tried to comfort him and persuade him to abandon the dreadful plan he was pursuing to destroy himself. He thanked us with tears in his eyes; and, speaking briefly of his family, said it was too late. Before the following Sabbath he was secured, whilst destroying some articles in a store, in a state of unmanageable frenzy; and within twenty-four hours of that event his corpse was consigned by me to its last resting-place!

It might be supposed that total abstinence, from the conclusions to be drawn from this state of things, would be a successful preventive against such deplorable occurrences. But the reverse is declared to be the case, and by those who are much better qualified than I am to give a professional and deliberate opinion upon this point. A judicious and properly regulated use of wine and ale, it is admitted generally, and even brandy, if of a good quality, conduces more to support and arm the constitution for contending with the numerous enemies to which it is exposed in such an enervating climate, than to injure it; and a case is on record which proves the folly of every

extreme, and shows that an attempt to adopt the Tee-Totalizing system, especially when tried by those who have been accustomed to some stronger kind of beverage than water, is a mere delusion. It was in the death of a Missionary, of what persuasion I cannot say, who fell a sacrifice to the advice of some enthusiastical water drinker.

CHAPTER XII.

SAMENESS OF DAILY LIFE.—MEANS OF RELIEF IN CHANGE OF SCENERY.—A RIDE TO GODRICH; KROO-TOWN.—A REMARKABLE NATURAL OBJECT; THE WHITE-NECKED CROW.—STREET OCCUPATIONS; CURIOUS MEDLEY OF GOODS AND NATURAL PRODUCTS.—KROOMEN'S TASTES AND HABITS; THEIR FANCY FOR FLAGS.—CHAPEL.—DANGEROUS STATE OF BRIDGE AT THE END OF KROO-TOWN; VIEW FROM IT; AFRICAN LAUNDRESSES, AND THEIR MODE OF WASHING.—RIDE TO KING TOMS; AN AGREEABLE FRIEND; RIDE ROUND THE POINT; AN EVENING TO BE REGRETTEED; THE ROMANTIC GRAVE, AND FAITHFUL DOG; COAL-SHED, GARDEN, FLOWERS, NIGHT-MOTH AND NIGHT-BIRD.—PUPILS; EVENING DEVOTIONS.

“EVERYTHING that is new, or uncommon,” says the author of the Spectator, “raises a pleasure in the imagination, because it fills the soul with an agreeable surprise, gratifies its curiosity, and gives it an idea of which it was not before possessed. We are indeed so often conversant with one set of objects, and tired out with so many repeated shows of the same things, that, whatever is new or uncommon contributes a little to vary human life, and to divert our minds, for a while, with

the strangeness of its appearance. It serves us for a kind of refreshment, and takes off from that satiety we are apt to complain of in our usual and ordinary entertainments." There are few, if any of those, whose lot has cast them on the Western Coast of Africa, particularly in Sierra Leone and Free-town, who will not feel how pertinently the Essayist's remarks apply to themselves, if they have any capacities of mind and soul to appreciate any enjoyment, unconnected with, and independent of the pleasures and pursuits of mere sense. The small circle of human intercourse, within which we are circumscribed there, and the same tiring round of occupations we are obliged daily to walk, make it, indeed, refreshing, if I ought not to say, absolutely necessary for us to indulge ourselves, as much as we can, in change and novelty. And this is the more requisite, as the choice here of what is truly desirable to a refined and intellectual mind is of but small extent. Sierra Leone is not wanting in the most delightful means of administering to such necessities. In its valleys and villages, amongst its mountains and districts, along the quiet, retired shore and beach of its capes and bights, the imagination is never at a loss for a rich supply of objects to awaken reflection, and divert the thoughts from their ordinary

and unsatisfactory channel: and, if you can enlist a companion of congenial feelings with yourself, one who does not think it a sin to smile, or a crime to laugh; whose christianity is not so puritanical as to require a peculiar phraseology, and certain unalterable gravity of expression; and whose religion is not so shallow and hypocritical as to consider it essential to be always the professionalist in gesture and in look, in conversation and in dress,—you may pass with not only harmless pleasure, but rational enjoyment, a few days at the still sequestered village of Godrich. After my first visit to this retired little spot, it became a place of frequent and agreeable resort to me, whenever I could steal away from the polluting atmosphere of Free-town. The whole journey, indeed, from my residence to this village, was never without its attractions; and, if ever I return to Sierra Leone, could I “squat” down there without inconvenience to my parishioners, I believe I could bring myself to fancy it was another Sabine farm.

To go to Godrich you have to pass through that part of Free-town to which I have already alluded, namely, Kroo-town: I suppose it is so called from the number of Kroomen who inhabit it. There is in this locality much in the way of character to amuse and instruct; and the street is

not without its other subjects of engrossing interest. At a little distance from the house which I rented, a bridge arches the road: the mountains to the left side of this, and which cast their dark shadows on the barracks, roll down a stream of refreshing and well-tasted water, which pursuing its meandering course, o'er hill and dale, through bush and rock, until it gains the spot I am speaking of, slides over a level, projecting some ten or twelve feet from the bridge, and discharges its waters, as if mimicking some mightier stream, into the rocky depth, along which it finds its way to the sands, where it is lost amongst the elegant bamboos, and other trees which line the sides of the steep. A few yards to the right of the bridge, and from the ground below, rises a tree of such extraordinary height, as to deserve the title of a Wonder of its kind. The body of the tree is quite bare, except near the ground, where it is embraced by many thick and wanton creepers: its top spreads out in majestic relief, towering above every other object save the hills, and with these in their loftiness, it seems to challenge a kind of rivalry. Amidst its inaccessible branches, the *White-necked* Crow builds its rudely-constructed nest in defiance of man, and rears its carnivorous young secure from the vengeance of his grumblings at the loss of his chickens, which he often sees borne aloft in its

claws through the air to the hungry brood. From this bridge to another, which terminates the town at this quarter of it, your way is through as strange a scene as you can possibly conceive. The houses and stores in this neighbourhood are of an inferior stamp, and occupied by tenants such as might be expected to rent them. In the rainy season the waters overflow the gutters which are dug on each side of the street to receive them, and make a broad stream, in which you may then see pigs, ducks, and children, like one common family, paddling about together. The stalls, sheds, and rude stands, are supplied with the oddest variety of saleables: the ground is not without its commodities;—children's playthings, china, empty bottles, guns, little glass cases of cotton, red night-caps, tapes, bush swords, blown decanters, whatsoever is likely to tempt the coppers from your pockets; beads, necklaces, shoe-ribbon, threads, harlequins, clowns, and columbines hang sportively moving backwards and forwards from the cross strings which run from side to side of the stalls; and oranges, colas, ocores, African soap, and an endless diversity of such things are laid out on the ground as well as on tables in little lots. Piles of fire-wood, heaps of corn with the calabash measure, bottles of Palm-wine, the nectar of the clime when good;

large basins of palm-oil and dried fish ; the filthy-looking balls of Aguidee-Ra, which, although not very inviting to the eye, are really very palatable as I afterwards found out, if you can only depend upon the cleanliness of the maker. Then there is an ugly, black looking sort of fish, rounded with a tiny wooden peg, which fixes head and tail together, and offers you a choice, if Africanized enough to taste such delicacies. There are the small pretty bird-peppers and capsicums with their bright colours of green and red ; the native spinach which proves a capital substitute for our vegetable of that name ; the bunches of plantains no contemptible dish when nicely fried in slices ; and now and then a cabbage or some English herbs, for which you care not to pay ninepence or a shilling. Lettuce, land-cresses with sweet potatoes and ground nuts, which very tolerably answer the want of filberts and walnuts after dinner if not burnt in the baking, leave no cause for complaining of the colony, as regards the necessities of life.

But, what gives to this neighbourhood its uncommon and animated character are the lengthy narrow Streamers of various colours, which are to be seen quivering aloft, high above the huts and houses in every direction. These are hoisted in the usual way on a pole fixed in a rising mound,

and have all the appearance of Signal Staffs, with their ropes and pulleys. The Kroomen erect them at the top of the different streets, which lead to the water where they keep their boats or canoes for conveying goods or passengers to different parts of the coast. The names of these watermen are printed on boards, and some of them are very funny appellatives, such as, "The Marquis of Granby," "Tom Pepper," "Black Joke," "The Duke of Wellington," "Gentleman," "Dandy." The way in which these men mostly amuse themselves is with a native Game called "Warry," which they play, sitting on the ground, and over which they often gamble with as much excitement as Englishmen, or other Europeans. There is another amusement in which they occupy themselves. It is called "Kick a-ra-boo," which is literally, "The Dance of Death," and consists of a native harp, which when played has much the sound of "tink-a-tink-ting," and is very disagreeable.

After passing a chapel to the right, as you go to King Tom's, you descend the slope to a bridge which points the two roads, the one leading to Wilberforce, and the other conducting you to the above establishment. The chapel is a plain neat building, where service is performed in the week day as well as on Sunday, and belongs to the Wesleyan

Denomination of Christians. The bridge, which is built in irregular angles, and not high enough from the ground to be safe, possesses, nevertheless, local interest. Beneath it on the side towards the sea and several feet below is a large basin of water of some depth, formed by the conflux of the streams, and surrounded with broken masses of rock. A variety of trees combine with their rich foliage to throw around it a gloom, and bend their boughs and branches in familiar embrace over this still spot to invest it with a romantic spell. But if your horse happens to back and rear, or cut the angle of the bridge too sharply in a sudden freak, as once happened to myself, it is surprizing how soon fear will put to flight all the pleasurable imaginings of fancy. The town, as you look over the bridge from this point, is very striking: commanding, as it does, just view enough of the sea and shipping to finish a bold natural picture. On the opposite side the scenery loses nothing of its imposing features, but is enlivened by the groups of women busily employed in washing. These African laundresses are the most woeful enemies to your wardrobe. There they are, fifty of them, below, knee-deep in the stream, in all their glory, dashing the bundles of unnameables into the water, or beating them *vi et armis* on the rocks, on which they spread them out, with an instrument some-

thing like to a flat paddle! Thump, thump, sounds again and again up the bank, as they repeat the stroke amidst laughter and chattering, whilst the little progeny are dabbling and dancing in the cool wave! Reader, if you venture out to Sierra Leone take plenty of buttons, and get your Lady Fair to make you a housewife and well stock it with the Sempstress's implements, for you will have to work for yourself, there, if a bachelor. Nor forget to learn a little of the art of sewing before you enter upon your travels.

But I see my little friend, the Wesleyan Minister, nearing the bridge on his little brown cob, with a smile which seems to indicate he was meditating a visit to me. It is just so! And he has persuaded me to ride round King Tom's point. Away we go at a good gallop, inhaling the delicious fragrance of the lime hedges, and through the self-formed avenue of trees, which nature has planted there, as if purposely to please us! And now we are comfortably seated *tête-à-tête*, with a bottle of racy claret, as happy as two mortals can be in a fever land, and some thousand miles from home!

I shall often think of the many agreeable hours which I passed in that noble and lengthy piazza in the company of those friends, its inmates, who presided over the Institution, and whom I always found delighted to give me a hearty welcome;

an act of brotherly kindness I must acknowledge but rarely shown to me by others in my profession, and only in one or two instances. Indeed, almost the only individuals who manifested any disposition to cultivate those little attentions to one another, which do wonders towards establishing that good will which ought to influence and govern the members of a body of religious teachers, so far at least as regarded myself, were the Pastors of a Denomination different from my own. But for the good offices of these friends, I should have had to experience a more distressing blank than I did in the want of that particular society, which I sought but in vain to enjoy, and which is so desirable to a Clergyman.

It was a lovely evening, and as we sat watching one object or another as they passed to and from the shore the night closed in upon us. Nothing strikes the new comer more forcibly than the sudden and unperceived transition from day to night in Sierra Leone. The charming twilight of Europe is a mental enjoyment unknown to the inhabitants of those tropic shores. That intellectual portion of time, that hour of poetry and thought; that short but precious interval most sacred to, and valued by, minds and hearts which are not altogether dependent upon tangible and visible objects for subjects to administer to their

respective wants, is a deficiency which must be felt by every one who is not insensible to the cravings of an immortal nature.

Light after light might be seen suddenly issuing from some hut or house over the town which lay before us. Every now and then the splashing sound of an oar from some fishing canoe entering the little creek close by, or making for the more public place of landing, would break the quiet of the hour. Voices sometimes would come forth from the opposite shore, a sling's cast from us; and suddenly the boatman's well-known and not unmusical nor spiritless song would start us from our meditations in which we might have fallen for a few moments. Smoking is a practice in Sierra Leone which every one, without exception, may indulge in. And the greater part of the community fail not in taking advantage of a custom thus so liberally tolerated. For very few indulgencies receive universal and blameless sanction in Free-town. When, however, cigars of a good quality can be procured, and they are used in moderation, I have heard most persons say they are a wholesome preventive to the effects of the malaria. My little friend appeared to relish mouthing the tobacco amazingly, and he looked all happiness during the time he was dispensing about him the Indian Aroma. The most thought-

ful philosopher could not have surpassed his imperturbable gravity, which would only relax into a smile when he reminded you that your glass was empty. This once replenished, the cigar would, as it were, instinctively return to its natural position; and thus, with a little agreeable conversation, the exchange of mutual sympathies, which were alike directed homewards, or dwelt upon our positions in life, similar in many respects as residents of so undesirable a place as Sierra Leone, hour after hour would steal too quickly away, that otherwise had proved dull and unprofitable. Sometimes we would stroll about the paddock or garden, and listen to the dove or wood-pigeon, or grumble at the croakings of the "*Ranæ palustres*," which not the utmost stretch of fancy can allow is a pleasant noise. Then there is in the first enclosure just mentioned, a tall cocoa-nut tree, which marks a Spot of mournful interest, in ruminating on which we would think more sorrowfully of kindred ties never perhaps to be reunited in this world. For the funeral-plume leaves of that sad-looking tree bend them over a grave whose marble slab hides from human eye the remains of one, who, but for the Wish he expressed to sleep his last sleep there, had ere this been forgotten. The Inhabitants of that tomb, which time even appears to

respect, and over whose top the pride of India hangs its graceful boughs, rich with its delicate and lilac-looking blossoms intertwining with the cocoa, as if to shelter the spot from the destructive heat, are a Man and a Dog. Affection so attached this animal to his master that he would not leave the grave, and he was buried with him!

Proud Reason! Mark what thou dost rarely know,—
A Friendship Instinct only could bestow!

From this paddock you pass through a little gate into the garden, which is partly enclosed by the old wall and mounds, on which formerly some cannon were mounted. There are two fine trees in it which afford an agreeable shade, and a flourishing vine once grew there which produced abundance of very tolerable grapes, but has been lately cut down. English vegetables, as well as those indigenous to the country, are reared with a little trouble, and succeed pretty well. I have seen as fine cabbage and carrots in the Commisariat's garden as in England, making allowance for the climate. Turnips also, and English Herbs, Lettuce, Cucumbers, and Celery, I have produced in my own garden. Some English Flowers thrive, particularly the Geranium; but the Roses soon degenerate. The Dahlias do better. Many of the

native flowers are exquisitely beautiful, and the fragrance of some of the shrubs too powerful for enjoyment. The four o'clock Flower, which only blossoms in the morning and evening, and resembles our Marvel of Peru, is very pretty, and at night, as you walk by them, you may observe a large Moth busily employed in extracting from the petals its sweet food. This insect is remarkable for its long proboscis, which measures at least an inch; and which it curls up in a very neat manner. It is also otherwise very curiously marked, and makes a loud, buzzing noise, which may be heard at several yards' distance.

Whilst occupied in noticing these little insects one evening, and listening to the curious noise which they made, my attention was directed to something which passed with a swift and zig-zag motion through the air, and which I supposed at first sight to be a large bat. But, on watching its return, it proved to be a Bird about the size, I should guess, of a large swallow. It had two extremely long and single feathers protruding from the tail, very large at the extremities, and widening to a breadth of some inches. These, in its rapid and irregular flight, had the appearance of two other birds following as if in pursuit of it—for the length of these feathers, from their fineness, were scarcely perceptible. I have

heard it called by some, the Boatswain Bird, from the above circumstance.

Not the least agreeable portion of the time which I passed at King Tom's with my good friends there was that part of the evening when their duties called them away for a few hours to superintend the exercises of their pupils. For a very good library belonging to the Tutors always supplied me with a fund of instructive reading, which the quiet and retirement of the spot enabled me to pursue with a pleasure and profit unknown in Free-town. These scholars are provided with food and clothing, and lodged in that commodious establishment free of expense; and their education is not confined to Theological subjects, but embraces general knowledge. I know that the Lectures delivered to these young people are extremely creditable to those who have to prepare them, and that every care is taken by the tutors and ministers to fulfil their duties. No place could have been selected better adapted to the purposes of such an establishment: the situation itself, close upon the sea,—at a short distance, scarcely a mile, from the town,—enclosed within extensive grounds, and the building affording such accommodation as is not to be met with in any other house in the colony. The rooms are magnificent as to size and proportion, with fire-places,

grates, and every other domestic convenience ; and the store-rooms below on the same scale of extent. The pupils are taught to chant as well as sing ; and I have often listened with delight to the sounds of these young Christian voices, so well-timed and modulated, and felt the imposing effect they wrought upon my mind at an hour, and on a spot so peaceful and retired.

But, hark ! the evening bell sounds the hour of devotion for the pupils. For a moment all is still as silence can make the habitation of so many living beings. Solemnity and Prayer now consecrate every heart and mind to higher occupations than the ordinary pursuits of life. Then bursts forth the Psalmody of many voices, chanting or singing the praises of Him who is over all ; a few moments' pause ; the sound of supplication is again heard ; and the cares and duties of the day are over.

CHAPTER XIII.

RIDE TO WILBERFORCE.—THE FERRY; METHOD OF CROSSING IT: NEW BRIDGE; VIEW FROM IT.—FISHES: ASCENT OF THE ROAD: PROSPECT: GARDENS: RICE-BIRDS AND THEIR NESTS.—ROAD TO LOMLEY: PROGRESS OF CULTIVATION: THE WISE PROVIDENCE OF NATURE SHOWN.—THE TWIN TREES.—LOMLEY; THE VILLAGE CONSTABLE: A NIGHT IN NATIVE TOWN QUARTERS, AND RUSTIC SUPPER.

THE distance from King Tom's to Godrich is about five miles, and the road to that village diversified and abounding in local attractions. Leaving the bridge described in the last chapter you ascend a rise of a few yards when you again descend and come to a kind of ferry. At this spot you get a view of the Colonial Church, just such as would set it off to advantage in a picture, as it rises in the background from amidst a thick sprinkling of trees and shrubs which relieve the harshness of its plain outline, whilst an inlet of the sea dividing the mainland, gives to the foreground at high-water, the credit of having a fine lake. Steep embankments shut you in on one side, and the road towards the sea falls perpendi-

cularly and abruptly, shelving down upon the beach and covered with bush and wild creepers. On the other side of the inlet or bay, is a farm, which belonged to Governor Fergusson, and where that lamented officer devoted much of his leisure time to the cultivation of the land, and encouragement of both English and Native produce.

Until very lately, in going to Wilberforce, you were obliged to swim your horses over the water which the sea pours in here across the road with a strong current. I was never very partial to this part of the journey, although it assisted, by way of incident, to make your ride interesting. This business is for the most part easily managed, if your horse is accustomed to the stream, which most of the animals are. Off goes the saddle, which with the bridle is bundled into the canoe; and a rope, with which you should always be provided, having been thrown round the beast's neck, some one gets into the canoe and swims Dobbin across to the opposite land. If he is docile and well-educated, there is not much trouble; but should he prove otherwise, and your man be stupid, the palaver is no joke. Sometimes the natives will off with their clothes—for the African is famed for his aquatic abilities (the water being almost as much his element, I believe, as the land), and coolly accompany their charge in this manner over the ferry.

All this inconvenience is now avoided by a neat and durable arch of sound masonry thrown across the current, by which the accommodation to passengers who come from the surrounding villages into Free-town is greatly increased. It is only surprising that earlier attention to this necessary improvement has not been given in the manner it has now received, as vast expense would have been spared in the many endeavours to construct a less durable and scientific bridge, which was not proof against the power of the stream and flood in the rainy season. At low tide it is amusing to see the men and women engaged with their *Blies* in hand catching the fish which are left within the space parted off from the main sea by hurdles and boughs, which they fix from point to point of land and cover with palm-leaves and like stuff to prevent the finny race escaping with the receding waters.

Having cleared the ferry and re-adjusted your saddle, the road continues to get steeper; and from its rocky and somewhat rough nature you cannot move forward very quickly. Here the view of the surrounding country begins to open before you and yield the eye and imagination the most panoramic sight of Free-town, its harbour, shipping, and the intervening villages and inland farms, affording you an eagle glance of the whole sweep of wild and verdant champaign. To the

right, across the bay, which separates it from yourself, Murray Town with its large cotton-trees marking its position, stretches itself before you. The Signal Hill, a lofty, solitary spot, from which the vessels inland bound are notified by a moderate use of gunpowder, fills up the intermediate ground; and huts and houses with their fruitful gardens lining the road finish the prospect. Hundreds of rice-birds greet you as you pass along with their twittering and chirping, which fill the air with their noise. Their note, if such it can be called, is sharp and monotonous: but their numbers, their variegated colours, the unceasing fluttering they keep up, hanging by their feet to the thousands of nests, which literally weigh down the branches, whilst finishing their clustering habitations, or tending their young, have often led me to halt and observe these singular birds.

The Manager's house, which was occupied by that officer under the government—for it is now, I am sorry to say no longer to be seen, as an unfinished new building with all its rubbish stands in its place—arose upon the level of the hill. Its elevated situation enabled you to see it at a considerable distance and from almost any quarter. The last turning of the road leads you up directly to it. There is a little school-room belonging to the Wesleyans, which is used as a chapel, and stands

to the left as you approach; not far from which is the Manager's bell, and the flag-staff,—the first to tinkle honest people backwards and forwards on duty, to sound the alarum, or do any other useful work which falls to its department; the second speaks for itself, and always (if it did not droop for want of wind, on Sunday) fluttered in the breeze.

The days of delightful recreation which I have passed with so much benefit to my mind and bodily health at this once pretty place, and the reminiscences which they revive are cherished by me with mournful regret, as I look at the wilderness which disfigures the tastefully laid-out garden, the neat yard, and the abode of comfort, hospitality, and what is more, a most efficient officer, whose house and premises might well make it, from the care and attention bestowed by its tenant upon them, a desirable object of possession to others. But they exist no longer except in Memory !

The village of Lomley is not more, I should think, than two miles further and is reached by a road very uneven and in most places bad for riding from the rocks which in broken masses, here and there block up the passage. But the scenery from Wilberforce to this and the adjoining villages of Fonchia and Godrich is unvaryingly im-

posing. Between the first two of these the eye is relieved by the sight of the little huts, which industry and want are constructing in the rude, unartificial style of the country, yet not without the conveniences of the English cottage; and the Enclosures around them which are made of large stones or sticks and soon from their vegetating nature take root and throw out their leaves, make a cheerful and secure fence. The wooden bridges which you occasionally meet with are not without their effect; and the streams from the mountains finding their way down their sides, and stealing murmuringly over pebbles and rocks which nearly choke up their passage, are seen to advantage in the rainy season amongst the luxurious plantations and farms which almost hide them from the sight. Any one unaccustomed to see tillage, if this term be not inapplicable, carried on as it is in that colony, and observing the blocks of rock which are scattered about over the flats, as well as slopes and elevations of the country, would scarcely suppose it capable of yielding the abundance and variety of corn and other produce which it does. But Nature is more provident for her own than the unreflecting observer can see. What he may, superficially noticing, consider as incapable of ministering to man's wants, or as causing obstacles to the efforts

of the labourer, proves the very reverse. The rocks serve to hold together and protect the light soil from being washed away by the heavy rains : keep the roots of vegetation cool, and help to retain the moisture of the dews. Over the white and apparently barren sands, and close upon the beach may be seen the clover-looking leaf of the double-kernelled ground-nut, spreading itself thickly like that herbage over the unpromising soil. The swamp, which with its horrible stench and mangrove beds, appears to be utterly useless, yields plenty of excellent salt, which, on the ebbing of the tide, is collected from the surface of the mud, when hardened by the sun's rays, and is clarified by a simple process which I shall hereafter describe. The mountain landscape never tires me with looking at it : there is something in it so witching, the irregularities are so bold, light and shade are so distinctly painted ; and there is wildness about it, which fixes you to the contemplation of it, and makes you think and feel that it is a spot of Mystery.

Then for the sublime of Nature there is the Ocean, measureless in magnitude, stretching itself to the horizon in the loneliness of its grandeur, with nothing between its waters and yourself save the bush with its usual share of rank grass and a solitary tree or two along the sea-shore. The

scenic beauties of the ride, however, are enhanced by two noble sister-Trees which stand like monarchs of the Wood, by themselves. Their large trunks are parted but a little, and their wide-spreading branches extending themselves around, much after the figure of the oak, meet together forming one inseparable union of dark green shade, which stands out in bold relief beneath the mountains of lighter tint. No one passing that road can fail of noticing these trees, and being struck with their appearance.

There is nothing to be seen out of the common way at Lomley. Its population is not very numerous: and the two principal places of note are the grog-shop and the constable's house. I do not think the villagers here so advanced in civilization as in some of the other districts; and from what I could learn, the art of fingering other people's goods is much in request. Of its kind the constable's house is very comfortable, consisting of one good sized sitting-room, with three or four partitions, and the native country piazza. The floor is not boarded, nor bricked, but covered over, as are the sides of the house and its walls, with a kind of native plaster composed of sand and other materials, which is of a dark brown colour and very hard and durable. A very capital table filled the centre of the room, which, with

a native sideboard, sofa, and some very good English chairs, supplied no bad assortment of furniture. There is no fire-place; but if you want to warm yourself or dry your clothes, which crossing the creek renders sometimes necessary, you can be supplied with the three-legged charcoal iron pot and a good fire of coke, if you object not to an apartment of smoke. The roof is thatched, as are our cottages, very neatly; and a useful grass grows in the country, which Nature seems to have sown there for the very purpose. But for security the shingle or palm-leaf is the best, and should always be used as the safest in case of fire. The ceiling consisted of light poles laid on cross ones of larger size; and on these planks were loosely laid. The inner rooms were separated by partitions of the same material, one of which is the bed-room, and the other a *Sanctum Sanctorum*, where fat and favourite poultry are not refused a roost, nor forbidden from laying their eggs, or rearing their brood. And, although the kitchen is apart from the main building, one of the iron fire-pots above mentioned, is generally left burning, for, I suppose, the use of those branches of the family who are not permitted, or do not wish, to be often visible with the men-folk.

The evening was far advanced when I arrived at this village, and the weather did not altogether promise to be very favourable, being on the change. So I hesitated not to make myself at home with my honest host, the constable, who did everything in his power to make me both welcome and comfortable. This good-natured, civil creature deserves a compliment for his readiness at all times to oblige you; and moreover he is, I believe, a useful officer. There he is—I fancy I see him—with his round, simple, happy face, poking his head out of the door, and his hand already extended to greet me.

After my messenger, for that is the name generally given the boys or men, who carry your tin box, had deposited it in the Piazza, and I had seen to my rosinante, I made known to Father Davis my intention to slumber under his roof, and at the same time expressed my wish to relieve my appetite, which made known its wants in a manner not to be misunderstood. The poultry-yard was immediately visited, and an unfortunate victim was soon stewing away in the midst of some rice in honour of my arrival.

The table was soon covered with a clean cloth, and the constable's diligence quickly placed upon it my supper, which, with the supplement

of some cassada well baked, and pepper and a glass of ale made amends for other inconveniences. A drop of cogniac, discovered by mistake in the corner, with some boiling hot water and sugar, finished the repast; and down I threw myself on the sofa, half undressed, to sleep.

CHAPTER XIV.

DISAGREEABLE COMPANIONS.—CROSSING THE CREEK, AND WATER SIGHTS. — ALLIGATORS ; NATIVE IDEAS ABOUT THEM ; A FRIEND'S FEARS ; USE MADE OF THE ALLIGATOR'S FLESH ; CONTINUATION OF JOURNEY AND LOCALITIES.—THE "SQUATTING" SYSTEM CONSIDERED.—SWAMPS. — THE WATERFALL.—THE VILLAGE OF FONCHIA ; OCCUPATIONS, AMUSEMENTS, CUSTOMS ; IDOLATRY AND INDOLENCE OF THE MEN.—GODRICH ; ITS APPROACH ; THE MARKET SHED ; MY QUARTERS ; RETIREMENT OF THE SPOT ; CONTRIVANCES.—MORNING BEVERAGE AND BATHING.—PINE FRUIT ; PARASITE PLANTS ; PROLIFICNESS OF NATURE. — COLOUR OF THE SEA-WATER AT A CERTAIN SEASON. — SEA-GULLS. — BUSH FIRES.—THE AFRICAN PEDAGOGUE AND NATIVE AVARICE.—A WALK.—A STORM AND SCENERY WHILST IT LASTED.

My night's repose after the preceding evening was not the most enviable ; I had all the inclination of a tired man to sleep, but very little rest fell to my share. The mosquitoes tormented me without mercy, and the smoke from the coke pot was intolerable ; and when a respite from these miseries was granted me for a few minutes, which I could only obtain by hiding myself under the blanket, some ill-mannered cock from within one of the little rooms I have spoken of, would startle me

from a snooze into which I was about to fall by his shrill note : so that what with the buzzing and cock-crowing and fumes, I was thankful when the day returned.

Sending my messenger forward to get breakfast ready I prepared to cross the Creek, which is but a few yards from the constable's house. This creek is made by an inlet of the sea, is of considerable breadth, and surrounded with mangroves. It is passable on foot at low water, when it is a laughable sight to see the men and women wading through it. The ladies set about it very coolly ; put their burdens on their heads, and hold what they can in their hands. If any person is heard approaching, they drop down into the water up to the neck, and in that posture remain laughing at you until you are at a respectable distance. When the tide is in you are obliged to do as at the ferry ; and a good swim it is for the horses.

The unconcern with which the natives foot it through this creek would not lead you to suppose it was frequented by any Carnivorous animals ; yet Alligators, and of a large size, are sometimes seen here. The constable told me there were two at that time, and pointed out the spots where they were generally found. On my asking him if the people were not afraid to expose themselves in the manner they did, near to such danger, he replied in the nega-

tive; and, moreover, told me, that young as well as grown-up persons made no scruples about bathing there. A young man who ferried me over assured me that they would not mind man, only take fowl and the like. This statement, nevertheless, did not suffice to quell the apprehensions of a young friend of mine, who one day accompanied me to Godrich. Notwithstanding he was a more experienced traveller than myself, and had been accustomed to dangers and privations of no common kind, his nerves were not proof against some qualms which the fear of being capsized produced. And when we jocosely informed him what sort of creatures inhabited the water there, he only redoubled his entreaties that I would sit still and be quiet until we were safely landed. It is wonderful how well these native boats are managed, and with what skill and quickness they convey you over.

I was very desirous of procuring the skeleton of one of these alligators, or, at least, the head, that I might send it home to some of the Museums; and at last one of them was shot. But, on my learning this and making inquiry about the disposal of it, the constable told me that some of his people had eaten the flesh, and thrown away the bones, so I was disappointed as well as surprised.

On landing at the opposite side, the road is very

bad, exceedingly steep, and scarcely passable, owing to the rocks which obstruct the way. Sure feet and a good seat, are, therefore, indispensable for mastering such awkward places. Much the same style of country prevails as you proceed to Fonchia, the next village, abounding in waste land, which is, however, gradually disappearing; for the Natives are beginning to "squat" about, and cultivate it.

The appellation of "Squatting" is given to those persons who occupy a part of the uncultivated ground which has not been settled upon by any one previously. Large tracts are now beginning on this principle to produce corn among other things; and huts are lining the' road almost continuously from Lomley to Godrich, and will, I doubt not, soon make one uninterrupted street; for even since my residence in Sierra Leone, great changes have taken place for the better. But, at the same time, this System of Squatting brings with it considerable disadvantages to the Public and Government. The indiscriminate and unauthorized occupation of the waste land by any one, without the sanction of Government first obtained to do so, is injurious to its own interest as well as that of the public; as extensive lots are thus monopolized and a kind of claim obtained which there is much difficulty in afterwards setting aside. Some of

these lots are the best portions of land and most favourably situated, and might hold out inducements to much more respectable persons to obtain Grants of them from Government, by which the neighbourhood would be benefited by a more reputable community. There are some very pretty spots about Fonchia and Godrich ; it is a healthy part of the colony ; and I have no doubt whatever, if a good road of communication were made to these places from Free-town, and extended on to York, immense advantages would arise from it.

Some regulations are made, I am aware, for the disposal and purchase of land ; but sufficient attention is not paid in carrying them out. These Squatters are, also, very much addicted to cutting down the large and noble trees, as well as young saplings, in fixing their huts ; a practice, in some measure, lately checked, but which demands still greater vigilance to suppress.

The most serious obstacle to Godrich and this part of the country becoming a more frequent place of resort, are the Swamps, which can only be passed, with any degree of comfort, at certain hours of the day ; and in the rainy season would almost altogether exclude the possibility of moving backwards and forwards, without difficulty, or some inconvenience. Yet these impediments might be removed in the same way as that near to Godrich

was, by the activity of the Manager in throwing across a pile of stones with a strong bridge of wood and earth. Even the water at Lomley; in the hands of the present surveyors, might be passable if there was spirit enough on the part of the Authorities to overcome the difficulties.

Between Lomley and Fonchia, and just as you approach the last village, is a very pretty spot, made interesting by the old and rudely constructed bridge, which crosses a fall of fresh water that unexpectedly dashes down a rocky cascade half hidden by the trees, and meets the sea nearly at the mouth of a little bay formed by the land, which is here divided by large masses of rock and rising ground on each side. The fresh water is delicious to drink, and the fish swimming about in its clear depth, gives to the spot an English character. One more sharp and short push up that almost perpendicular, slippery ascent, and the swamp passed, we are at Fonchia!

A cluster of huts, few in number, and at irregular distances from each other, amidst timber and fruit trees of noble and luxurious growth, make up this Sherbro village. The inhabitants occupy themselves in mending their nets, drying and preparing their fish for store or their savoury meat balls. They also make straw hats, do something in the carpenter's line, and amuse themselves in

various ways. In passing through this village one day with the constable of Godrich, an arch, selfish Akoo, I observed sitting down on the ground, opposite to each other, scarcely clothed, and near the door of their dwelling, two aged people, a man and his wife. There was placed between them a piece of wood, modelled like a canoe, about two feet and a half in length, and seven or eight inches in breadth, with two partitions at each end. It had six holes in each side; and the aged couple were amusing themselves by quickly transferring from one hole to another some beans, of which each had twenty-four. The object of the game appeared to be to get these beans as expeditiously as possible into the partitions already spoken of, by some rules best known to themselves. I stood and watched them attentively; but, until the game was finished, they were evidently too much occupied in their amusement to notice me or my attendant. The constable at my request asked them to play the game two or three times over, which they did cheerfully. From what I could learn, the game somewhat resembled our Backgammon in principle.

I was told that they played for amusement and did not gamble; but I much question this fact, although in this particular instance it might have been so. The people here have a singular custom

of daubing or marking their faces and other parts of their body with a white juice which they extract from a particular tree. They do this to drive away disease or cure it; and when in this disfigured state, they look as one might imagine, very strange. I am inclined to believe idolatry is practised by them, as more than once I have seen an Idol placed outside their doors which they appeared anxious to conceal or remove, on my passing their huts. In this little circle of African life there were signs of comfort and abundance. How mistaken are people who have never had opportunities of judging from actual observation, about the real state of the African in Sierra Leone and on the Coast! But nothing can be more at variance with their real state than the opinions so commonly formed of their condition, that they are poor, and destitute, and miserable. Poverty amongst these people in the view we are accustomed to regard it, and as spoken of in relation to our paupers and indigent fellow-men, cannot be properly said to be known; for their wants are few, and easily supplied in this part of the world. Ninepence a day is good pay to a labourer for a day's work, reckoning from sunrise to four o'clock; and the cheapness of their living may be inferred from the fact of three-halfpence or twopence procuring them a good meal. Other kinds of work, however, are higher

priced. Then, to their credit and praise, it is affirmed of them, that those who have provision are seldom known to refuse a share of it to a neighbour or poor countryman who may stand in need of a meal. Poultry is reared by them without expense and trouble; but, although, for the most part, they may be purchased for a small sum, I could never obtain them when at Fonchia, where they are numerous, at the ordinary price. They prefer taking them to market or keeping them for their eggs. The frequent visits lately paid to this and the next village have taught these people to be covetous, and their natural love of money will not suffer them now as two years ago to be satisfied with a moderate value. Some of their huts are thatched very neatly with the native grass; and they have their ground piazzas with their carved stools and hammock in the last of which you may almost always see some big idle fellow rocking himself whilst the women are at work at the "Dummies," in which they pound their corn, and which resembles, in its shape, a dice-box, or weather-glass. Indeed many of these huts are much superior in every way to some of the wretched hovels of our poor working classes.

The approach to Godrich, which is scarcely half a mile further, is over the mangrove swamp, through

which you had formerly to wade your horses, or be carried "pick-a-back," like school-boys; but now over a stony solid bank of stone and rock, intermixed with the thick sticky marl of the swamp. I have spoken of this work before, and the public are indebted to the exertions of those Managers who had it made. The water of this swamp at high tide inundates the lower part of the street of Godrich which runs off to it. There is a large Market Shed where you may buy fowls, fruit, and native vegetables; but you must send in to Free-town for meat and most other articles. The main street, and it may be said to be the only one, is long and very broad, and is terminated at the top of it by the Constable's House, which is Government Property. As you ride or walk up to this dwelling it has a pretty appearance, being parted off by a thick lime fence and wicker gate; and the outside of this fence, for some yards beyond it, is covered with grass, on which a number of sheep and goats are generally grazing. This spot is a favourite resort of the wood pigeon, to which it is attracted in great numbers by the shelter and retirement it meets with in the thick undisturbed bush, as well as the berries which it comes in quest of at a particular time of the year. Their plaintive note, and the seclusiveness of the spot, undisturbed except by the waves sounding on the

beach, contribute to tranquillize the mind. Many a time, as I have sat in the piazza there, or on a rock in the yard, or strayed through the bush of an evening alone—these have yielded me a soothing although a melancholy pleasure,—but chastened melancholy is not without its benefits. My quarters here were not quite so weather-proof or snug as at Lomley; and my disagreeable companions were multiplied by rats and black ants, against whose annoying bites I had to exercise all my ingenuity, for the insect of this name is a most severe punisher if he once gets fair hold of you. The constable's house in fact soon became a second Robinson Crusoe's dwelling. The undressed eatables were suspended from the cross-beam by a string well greased at good length to keep them from the depredations of these creatures. Whatsoever could be concealed under covers, in basins or dishes of water, was in that way secured. The Tin Box helped to serve me for a cupboard; and in place of a lamp I suspended my candle, or the palm-oil lamp, from the beam. I had the choice of two sofas, which with sheets and blankets I made tolerably comfortable. With a modestly supplied larder I thus continued to pass, occasionally, several days in hermit style, to my satisfaction and delight, finding daily some fresh object of interest in my retreat to repay me for the

absence of Town Noise and Confusion. It sometimes happened, that my good-natured Little Friend, or a stray visitor would steal upon my solitude, and thus supply me with quite as much society as I desired.

The first thing to be done in the morning whilst here was to substitute a glass or two of Palm Wine for the tea or coffee. When brought fresh and cool by daybreak, it is the most delicious drink you can imagine, and its fine pungent acid is too tempting to let you rest satisfied with one glass alone. It is, also, very wholesome, and does not affect the head, as is the case later in the day when the heat and motion in carrying it about for sale causes it to ferment. It is sold at the cheap rate of a penny a bottle, and is extracted from the palm tree in this manner: an incision is made high up the tree by a knife drawn perpendicularly down the bark about two or three inches; a Calabash or Bottle is fastened to the stem near to the aperture with its mouth placed close to the opening; the wine is then immediately obtained, or the Palm-Wine Seller leaves the vessel there and returns when he thinks it is supplied. The quality of this beverage varies considerably, according to the nature of the tree from which it is drawn, and is generally adulterated for sale in Free-town, when it tastes no longer like the

same thing. It is not, however, so harmless that the natives cannot manage to intoxicate themselves with it, which is sometimes the case.

After quaffing this African Nectar, I generally betook myself to a tolerable Bathing place a few yards down upon the beach; for my Quarters were on a little elevation, above the sands.. This was artificially formed by some rock-stones heaped together to secure the bather from the shark—bathing being here a most refreshing and healthy practice. By these little arts I got an appetite for a curried fowl, or grilled chicken, some rice, and cassa or yam, which with a glass of ale, or claret and water, made a good provision for the further labours of the day. Unlike most of my neighbours, I rarely had patience enough to remain inside the house during the mid-day heat. Where there was so much to be seen, to learn, to enjoy abroad, I could not bring myself to pore over a volume for so many hours, and accordingly I took too many liberties with myself. Smoking is a qualification to which I have never been able to attain, and will therefore, plead some excuse for my singularity in this particular.

The prolificness of nature in this climate is astonishing, and would hardly be credited by those who are unacquainted with it. But the decay, alas, of every thing is in proportion to it, if not

more rapid ! How they came there I am unable to say, but I have seen Pines of extremely fine growth and found them in flavour equal to their external promise. The black pine, too, is to be met with. These are found in groups, which only require to be planted out to bear excellent fruit, and they are on the sand, close upon the beach. Parasite Plants are very plentiful, and many capital specimens are to be had, particularly that of the Pine fruit. The beautifully green and blossoming bush borders the sands down to almost the water's edge and indeed at high tide the sea washes them.

Whilst ruralizing at Godrich I was sometimes struck with the singular colour of the sea-water, particularly in the month of January, and at sunset. It would then appear of a dark green hue, and have a strong and most disagreeable smell. The belief is that it is not unwholesome, and that it is caused by the decomposition of old sea-weed, which is rejected for the new supply at this season. Until this discolourment, however, disappears, fish is very scarce, they say. The change takes place in two or three months, and the ocean resumes its wonted colour.

Thousands of seagulls, of various species, very beautiful in form, and of snowy whiteness in their plumage, may be seen winging their mazy

flight in wild and rapid motion, figuring in unnumbered circles and hovering over the shoals of fish which sportively throw themselves out of the water, regardless of the danger above them. Towering to a certain height, and with a precision which looks as if the distance were calculated, they suddenly drop, several of them at once, with the rapidity of a descending ball into the wave, and as quickly emerge from it, bearing away their prey in their beak. Some of the feathers of these birds are perfect specimens of softness and delicacy of pencilling.

But for an imposing and brilliant sight, the Bush-Fires should be seen in the evening; and if the night is dark they are truly magnificent in their effect. You may watch them for hours without weariness. See how they illumine the sides and tops of the mountains with their fitful and lurid flames! Now they send forth their crackling sound down into the villages and lowlands! As the night steals on, brighter and brighter, louder and louder, they shine and crackle! Masses of flame roll along their spiral heads of fire in one continuous line! One while they disappear as if extinguished; the next they burst out again with increased brilliancy and power! The devouring element reflects its light over the sea, making the ocean look like a broad sheet of transparent light!

Not a sound is to be heard, for all is "solemn stillness," except when the Fisherman's song and the splashing of his oar are heard in the water, as he moves rapidly up and down its surface, labouring for a meal, or the reward of a few coppers, which will purchase as much fish as you can eat.

This little village has its Schoolmaster; but he is the veriest pedagogue you could picture; and I cannot say much for his merits or his preceptive qualifications—if I am to judge from the proficiency of the children under his care, whom I examined and found deplorably deficient in the most common subjects of religious knowledge. But what can be expected for the small pittance which is paid him for his trouble? This man gave me a very fair proof of African avarice, by asking me a most extravagant price for a few beans which I would have bought of him. He so disgusted me, that I left him to eat his beans himself, and gave the value of them to some children.

The children in the village of Fonchia would often amuse me, when I first took up my abode here, by their shyness. The little urchins, some of them scarcely able to toddle, would get behind the trees, eye me, give a scream, and scamper away to their "Mammies" and "Daddees," crying as lustily as their lungs would let them. But the few coppers distributed amongst them, for which they would

furiously scramble, to the great delight of their parents, soon reconciled them to the White Man; and when they understood I was the "Big Parson," of Free-town, they speedily lost all further reserve, but became rather annoying than otherwise in their welcomes and salutations.

During my stay at this village it was the favourable season of the year, yet there were sharp showers, with a good deal of distant thunder and lightning. The clouds looked dark and lowering. As soon as the weather became in some degree settled, I went down to the sea-shore, and seating myself on a rock watched the working of the elements and their effects on the scenery. They were most grand and striking! The watery horizon was almost buried in a dense mist, but a faint streak of hopeful light was on the extreme edge of it. A large, solitary vessel was indistinctly visible through the mist which nearly hid it in the distance. Heavy clouds of the most fantastic shapes, skirted in their blackness the tops of the mountains; and the lightning from afar, in fits and starts, shot its red, pale gleam athwart the mass of objects in the foreground. Five or six fishing canoes were tossing up and down on the ocean surge, now buried in the waters, now borne aloft on the topmost waves, speeding along at the same time with an incredible swiftness over the billows.

But what most charmed me and raised my thoughts in reverential wonder to the awful Omnipotent, were the Changes in the foreground along the shore which bounds Fonchia, the Sherbro Village, and the numerous palm-trees beyond it. About half-way down the mountain side all was clear, bright, and tranquil, as if no angry storm was at hand to mar the peaceful, lovely prospect. Sea-gulls were there in every direction, now sailing with motionless wings through the air, now round and round like fairy things of light; and, when a dark cloud would suddenly spread itself over the background of the scene, these lovely birds looked like so many brilliant spirits of the fancy which seemed to delight in that which to poor sinful man brings terror and dismay. The Painter or the Poet might have found in the contrast of light and shade, the rich colouring, the wild grouping of objects, and the verdant foliage which bounded the beach, the finest subjects for gratifying the Imagination; and the Christian would not have been at a loss for matter of reflection, and adoring praise!

CHAPTER XV.

VISITOR.—REFLECTIONS ON RETIREMENT: INCONVENIENCES: STUPIDITY OF SERVANTS: SHORT COMMONS.—“PAPA,” OR PILOT ELLIOTT AND HIS VISIT: NATIVE COOKERY: AN ODD SAYING: SUPERSTITION.—RETURN TO FREE-TOWN: THE OLD SOLDIER, AND A BIT OF RIVALRY: SHERBRO HAMLET: SHERBRO VILLAGE: CANOES: FINE SANDS: PALM-TREES, THEIR BEAUTY AND UTILITY: THE CAPE: “PAPA’S” HOUSE—AN ADVENTURE, AND NARROW ESCAPE: LIGHT HOUSE: MAROONING SPOT, AND MOURNFUL RECOLLECTIONS: ABERDEEN: THE CREEK: DANGER FROM QUICKSANDS, AND ACCIDENT: NATURAL OBJECTS: THE SNAKE: THE “BUG-A-BUG” HILLS: LIZARDS AND CHAMELEONS: A LIZARD FIGHT: THE BLACK ANT, AND ITS DESTRUCTIVE POWERS: THE AFRICAN WASP: BEES: SWARMING IN THE CUPBOARD.

ONE evening, as I was quietly taking my coffee at the back window in the piazza, which looked out into the yard of the constable’s house, and commanded an unobstructed view of the long street with its different objects passing and re-passing in the distance, I perceived at the end of it, a Little Figure on a Little Horse cantering up to my abode. It was my good friend of King Toms, who was on his road to York, a district village in the mountains.

I had already been four or five days a recluse, and was, therefore, glad to hail him. Having assisted in seeing that his Rosinante was duly provided for, I ushered him with all due form and ceremony into my quarters, gave orders for immediately despatching a fowl; which, with some trifling remains of the dinner, and "Bass's" abominable "best," was to furnish our supper-table. In the meantime we talked and laughed as much as we could to make the most of our time; for he was obliged to proceed on his journey the same night.

One good effect of retirement is, that it teaches you how to live without that society which is neither agreeable nor profitable; and at the same time makes you enjoy, with increased gratification, the companionship of the sincere friend and desirable acquaintance. Godrich, from its locality, possesses the advantage of enabling you to make this distinction: for laziness and fears find most powerful objections to frequent visits to that village, in the bad road and disagreeable swamps which it is necessary to submit to, unless you ride along the beach, which is only passable at low tide. This difficulty of communication, although existing more in fancy than reality, would render such a spot as the village I was in, a kind of self-banishment to many; but to me it was the more accept-

able from this circumstance. For one sees and is seen, in a certain way, more than is pleasant in Free-town. I am inclined to maintain that it is only, as in this instance, by the strong contrast of extremes, that change of place and society can afford a serviceable relief to the mind and body, such as is wanted in Sierra Leone. I always found this relief at Godrich, where I was free from the pains and penalties of such a community and routine of daily life as are to be met with, and submitted to in Free-town. Here, if you are so fortunate as to have a friend or acquaintance with whom a fellowship of ideas and sentiments can be reciprocated, independently of the mean and wretched selfishness which almost rules absolute in the colony, an unexpected visit from him adds to the enjoyment of your exclusiveness, from the very circumstance that it breaks the spell for a season.

The only drawback to the pleasure is, that you may be called upon to take the part of host, when your larder is not very well furnished. And a ride or sail from Free-town to Godrich does not by any means diminish the appetite. Tins of preserved meats, soups, fish, and vegetables you may get, it is true; but these luxuries are not purchased at a small per centage, nor can you always be certain of procuring them just when

you want them. So that, whenever a tin box, or blie, is seen preceding or following your visitor, it is an acceptable sign that relief is at hand. Before I got an insight into the way of living in the Bush, I must own I did not exactly comprehend how people could bring themselves to dine off inferior salt-fish, dried by the natives, and a bottle of palm wine; or breakfast upon eggs and biscuit; but, like my neighbours, I soon was brought by habit to own the truth of the old saying, that "Practice makes perfect." And, besides, it not unfrequently occurs, that when you send your messenger into town for a fresh supply of provision, the stupid fellow will return, after trying your patience for hours, without having executed his errand, or will bring something altogether different from what you wanted. Probably you send for bread, and, behold, he brings you meat; you want some biscuits, and he places yam or rice before you; you are longing for a glass of ale, and he puts upon the table some horrible imitation of port or sherry! So that retirement in Sierra Leone has its bitters as well as sweets.

My visitor had so thoroughly cleared out my cupboard of what was in it the preceding night, that I was forced to breakfast on two eggs; for nothing was to be obtained for love or money so

early as I wanted it. This was severely trying a man's qualifications for enduring abstinence.

Whilst at Godrich, I must not omit mentioning a casual visit paid me, on a subsequent occasion when stopping there, by the kind-hearted old pilot, Mr. Elliott, whom I always addressed, by way of compliment, as "Papa." Having entertained him to the best of my power, we took a walk to the village of Fonchia, and chatted with some of the natives. "Papa," who, besides his avocations as pilot and fisherman, holds the office as a minister of Lady Huntingdon's persuasion, made himself quite at home with his countrymen, and introduced me to the inmates of one of the huts, who were busily employed at their supper. They are always pleased if you sit down with them, and I did so. They were eating some cassada and some Mince-Meat Balls, which I had hitherto looked upon with aversion. The old pilot tried all his art to persuade me to taste one, which, after considerable demur, I consented reluctantly to do; for so far as appearance went, they were anything but tempting. To my surprise I found it exceedingly nice and savoury. I then became inquisitive and asked what its compounds were; and they told me it was made of what they call the African Sprat, the bones of which are removed, and the flesh when dried, finely pounded, peppers well

beaten, and several other ingredients mixed together. It is then formed into balls, and sold according to the size for one, two, or three coppers. It had the taste of highly seasoned mince-meat, and plainly showed these 'people know what is good. "Ah," exclaimed a very respectable, intelligent companion of "Papa's," as I was enjoying the *petit morceau*, "when you can eat and relish that, you need not fear dying from the climate, for you are then the same as an African." At the door of this hut stood something like a coop for chickens on the ground, which I thought was for that purpose; but I was told it was a kind of greegree used as a charm on the death of a child, and one had just died.

Proceeding with my companion on foot to Free-town, I made the best way I could home, breakfasting at Lomley with the constable, having been obliged to be carried on my guide's back through the swamps which were deep from the high water. I continued my walk along the fine sands, which extend up to the Cape, having fallen in with an old African soldier who himself had the honour of being entrusted with the tip-staff. This man had seen a great deal of service, and amused me with numerous interesting stories of his adventures. He had been in the Peninsular war, and engaged in several battles, having escaped death

to be rewarded with a miserable pittance of a pension scarcely enough to support him.

Foot Exercise in Sierra Leone is not a very favourite recreation, being considered, as I suppose, too fatiguing; and the relaxing nature of the climate, as well as its oppressive heat, are considerably against it. Yet I have never felt any inconvenience from my perambulations, which sometimes have extended to several miles. It is the only way, at any rate, to obtain an useful knowledge of the ways and habits of the African, in his progressive advance from barbarism to civilization, and of the results of European exertions in their behalf. The old soldier could not conceal his satisfaction at watching me pacing the sands at quick time; and was evidently not forgetful of his own former forced marches. Without shoes and stockings he stepped out determined to lose nothing of his military fame, and "ever and anon" would cast a knowing side-glance at me, to see if there were any symptoms of flagging on my part. But I had been well drilled by many a long walk in the path of country duty in England, and never spared myself in this respect since a resident on foreign shores; so my friend met with his match once in his life. In earlier years, too, my name had been on the list of applications for a commission, and I was, therefore, not altogether

ignorant of many things which pertained to my companion's profession. I purposely let him know this, yet in an indirect manner, and was rewarded by his best smiles and a compliment for my Pedestrian abilities. I have always noticed that it is a common characteristic of these people that nothing yields them greater delight than to find this kind of similarity in the knowledge of anything existing between yourself and them; and the circumstance alone of my being able to undertake such a walk and accomplish it so much to his satisfaction seemed to raise me considerably in his estimation.

Between the village of Fonchia and the Cape is a hamlet, consisting of a few huts occupied by natives, whose chief occupation is fishing. These people appeared to be very happy and contented, and everything about them looked neat and comfortable. I believe they were natives of the Sherbro country. They were engaged in mending and drying their nets; and two large canoes just finished were to be seen under the trees. They form these out of the solid trunk in a very workmanlike manner, which last a long time and show the size of timber that grows in the country. Along the land and close upon the sea-shore here, a number of palm-trees, forming quite a grove, thrive luxuriantly and greatly assist to relieve

the eye from a deficiency in the prospect which would otherwise exist. It is curious to observe to what a height these trees rise, and yet their roots descend a very little depth into the sand. They are, without doubt, an exceedingly marked feature in tropical landscape, and unequalled in the graceful beauty of their plummy leaves. Nor does the usefulness of these trees fall short of their external attractions. As a fruit in its natural state, the cocoa-nut is not particularly good to my taste; but it makes a good Preserve, and ground or scraped fine answers very well in pastry. The milk of the nut, if drank immediately it is gathered, particularly in the early part of the morning, is pleasant and very different from what is met with in England. The only tropical fruit, probably, which does not lose its quality by being transferred from its natural place of growth, is the Pine, which some consider equal if not superior when reared in the hot-house. The Bark of the cocoa, amongst other uses to which it is turned, is worked into very tolerable ropes. What is there in the Natural World, however insignificant to the human eye, which does not in fact serve to some useful purpose !

The Cape, of which I have spoken occasionally, is a Headland about three miles from Free-town,

where "Papa" Elliott, the pilot, has his dwelling on the edge of the Estuary which the sea forms at that part of the coast. It is a retired, snug little spot; and, if he is not out at sea in search of a job, which he well earns, you will most likely find him in his hammock making up for a watchful and sleepless night. His abode is a picture of itself; a first-rate hut, for it cannot be strictly called a house. It consists of one floor with a ground piazza surrounding it, and open on all sides. Under this Papa is to be found rocking himself to slumber, or mending his nets, or smoking his cigar, or, spy-glass in hand, on the look-out for a sail on the horizon. A variety of trees embosom and shut it out from view, so that but for the Signal-staff peering above them you would be unconscious of any human habitation being so near until it discovers itself, unexpectedly, before you. I shall not soon forget a little adventure which happened to me and two friends, officers of the commissariat, at this spot. We had gone to York and Kent, where they had to pay some pensioners, and returned the following day early. But calms and stormy weather alternately kept us out at sea until very late. To pass the Cape is generally an ugly business, and our boatmen did not, it was evident, ply the oar very good humouredly: they could not use

the sail, for the wind had fallen. All of us, I believe, were ill at ease. The men were doubtful about the point we were making for. They would have it to be in one part; my friends persisted it was in another. Away we were dancing in the mean time over the surge, for the sea ran high, and nearing land. At last after hallooing and scolding the fellows and declaring they wanted to upset us, with sundry assurances of good-will from my companions in travail towards our crew if they did not speedily put us out of danger—to our satisfaction we found ourselves close under the point of land on which "Papa's" dwelling stands. We hastened there as quickly as we could, thoroughly drenched. For fear of keeping my wet stockings on I had dispensed with them and other articles of dress; so, with nothing but a blanket thrown around me, my friends being in little better plight, I scrambled through bush and over rock until we gained the pilot's quarters, as miserable a looking three as you could well imagine. We soon aroused poor "Papa" out of his sleep, who did the best he could for us. Making the most of a bad case, we huddled together in his room, snatching what rest we could until dawn of day, when we proceeded to Free-town; and I sneaked off as fast as I could, to the great amusement of the officers, to their resi-

dence, which was close at hand fortunately, with my blanket wrapped about me, and "Papa's" long red cap on my head, as singular a specimen of a Divine as can be imagined.

Since that time a Light-house, built of the rock-stone of the country, has been erected on the rocks jutting out upon the sands. Suitable buildings are attached to it; and I suppose it will be found as useful as it is ornamental, for it is a neat as well as substantial building, and entitles the assistant surveyor, Mr. Bage, to great praise.

A short distance inland is a cottage prettily situated in the midst of some large and lofty trees, where I have passed many an agreeable hour. The property belonged to a gentleman of the name of Cattell, an officer of government; dead some time since, poor fellow. But the spot will be long remembered by me with mournful interest; for the last maroon I spent in Sierra Leone was there, in company with two esteemed friends, one also now no more, my second father, the Judge of the Mixed Commission, who fell a victim three months ago to the deadly climate, and the other, the late worthy Senior Officer of the Commissariat, a gentleman respected and valued by all who can appreciate sterling worth. How little did we then suppose, as we sat together beneath the shading branches of those noble trees, on the

grass, on which we spread our table-cloth, and laid out our provisions, laughing and beguiling the hours with the pleasures of friendship, that such a separation would so soon divide us.

Nor far from this is the village of Aberdeen, through which you may return to Free-town. But then you are obliged to walk or swim your horse over the creek, which is of considerable breadth at this point. And, if you adventure on the first of these, you will do wisely to have some one to go before you to try the firmness of the sand, or you may become embedded, horse and man, in the mud, which in parts is very treacherous. From neglecting this precaution once, although I had crossed it several times, I was very nearly swamped; and it was with the greatest difficulty we were extricated, the beast having sunk in his struggles nearly up to his haunches.

Moving about so much in the country as I did, I expected to meet with many interesting Living Curiosities in the Bush, but I was disappointed. During the whole period that I have been on the coast, not a tarantula has crossed my path, and only one or two small scorpions have shown their formidable pincers. Snakes and vipers are naturally associated in the mind with Africa; but one only of any size was exhibited to me whilst at Godrich. This was certainly a

formidable fellow, although more so in appearance than size or length, as I do not think it measured more than four feet and a half, or five feet long, and about three inches and a half broad. This reptile had all the venomous characters of its species, and was remarkably flat in its shape. Its scales seemed to me disproportionately large; and its ugly head was formed for deadly purposes. I could not preserve it, as it was so much shattered by the shot, neither could I learn its name; but the men who showed it to me said it coiled itself up under the dry leaves, which it somewhat resembled in colour, and where it remained in a torpid state for months, after procuring a good meal for itself, which it made of birds or small animals.

The "Bug-a-bug" Hills are amongst the most wonderful specimens of Insect skill and labour. These hills are to be met with continually, and they are of great size and height; they are, also, so hard as to require some time and trouble to be broken to pieces. I purposely watched the destruction of one of them, and saw a man occupied for several hours in the work. He was obliged to use a kind of pickaxe to break the mound, so solidly and adhesively was it put together by these diminutive creatures. The interior of it displayed the most perfect picture of

contrivance, ingenuity, skill, and proportion. It consisted of numerous apartments, which communicated with each other by long winding passages. These and the cells, which varied in size, were arched at the entrances, and, throughout, the roofs of the apartments, and the symmetry of the curve was beautifully preserved. These ants, which are larger than the common insect of that name, but not so formidable for their bite as the Black Ants, are of a white colour. There were myriads of them in the hill, but I discovered no food; perhaps I should have learnt more of their habits, had I waited until the work of demolition was finished. The colour of these ant-hills, which are great obstructions to cultivation, is of a somewhat reddish brown, and their form approaches to conical.

Lizards and Chameleons are everywhere to be found. The property of the last-named creature to change its hues according to the colour of the place where it is seen, is shown to advantage when observed springing from bough to bough of different trees and shrubs in the sunshine. Nor is it less amusing to watch them with their long tongues quietly catching the flies which come within their reach. I have never seen the Lizards so large or highly coloured as in other places; but their propensities to fight, and the skill and

severity with which they conduct and carry on their pugnacious habits are rather singular for such reptiles. I once observed two of these creatures, and from the appearance of a third—which I pronounced, right or wrong, to be the cause of the quarrel—I concluded the dispute was a love affair. They commenced the fight on the floor of my piazza, and kept it up, for I marked time, for several minutes. Nor was it play. They seized one another by the throat, twisted themselves over and over in the struggle, retreated, advanced, made their feints, fled, returned to the attack, at one time tumbled over the piazza without parting, so firmly did they hold each other, then darted up it again, until at last one securely pinned his antagonist by the throat. There he lay, gasping, until the third then took up the cause of the vanquished, and all of them disappeared, the conquered reptile being considerably the greatest sufferer.

The Black Ant, however, is the Insect most to be dreaded, not merely on account of its severe bite, but because it is so destructive to live stock as well as dead, and so difficult to get rid of, when once they have found their way into your house, or any other part of your premises. They are much larger than our full-sized emmet, have strong large front forceps, which inflict a severe

pinch, and are very powerful in their bodily actions, as well as swift in their movements. They are serviceable in one way, and that is, in clearing your premises of every species of filth and vermin, of which they will not leave a vestige. Only, when you receive a visit from them, you must look well to your poultry, goats, or anything you may have of a consumable description, and remove them to some place of security. Nor ought you to attempt to interrupt them in their march, or in any way interfere with them, but allow them free ingress and egress, suffering them to depart when they please. For they come in such armies that to annihilate them is out of the question, and prudence advises not to provoke them to reprisals. Sometimes you may meet with them as you are riding, and if they should happen to be pursuing their line of march across the road you will find very great difficulty in getting your horse to pass them, who is, as you will soon learn, as much afraid of them as his rider; and when the animal's objections are overcome by persuasion or force, he will step over them with the most marked caution. It has often seemed to me surprising that the Natives, who go about, as they do, without any covering to their feet, are not very frequently punished by these insects; but they do not appear to experience any great in-

convenience on this account. Perhaps the constant habit of walking without shoes or sandals so indurates the sole of the foot and the whole of that part of the limb, as to render it like hideskin, and proof against the bite.

Of the Insect tribe, the African Wasp deserves notice on account of its formation and the curious nest which it constructs. Its length greatly exceeds that met with in England, and, altogether, it is more prettily shaped. The division of the body is very remarkable on account of its length and the slenderness of the limb which joins the two parts together and is astonishingly fine. It stings as sharply as that in England and may be noticed decapitating the flies which it falls in with, in wholesale numbers. It constructs its nest on principles somewhat similar to the bee in the interior of its hut. The outside has a different appearance, being more like several layers of coating laid closely one over another and of a greyish colour.

Centipedes are said to grow to a large size in Sierra Leone; and their bite is very severe, although not fatal. A friend of mine once experienced the capabilities of this reptile to punish, in a singular manner. He was awoken from his sleep by a violent pain in the ear, and instantly jumping out of his bed, wrapped a handkerchief

round his head. He was immediately seized with a violent fit of ague, and this was followed almost directly after by a burning dry heat all over his body, which he at once concluded to be the Country Fever, for he had not been long in the Colony. He soon fell asleep, and, on awaking in the morning felt little suffering beyond the sensation of the prick of a pin when he touched the affected part. Mentioning the circumstance to a friend, he was told it arose from the bite of one of these reptiles. He was not a little surprised at this, and examined his bed; when, indeed, and in earnest there was the terrible offender. My friend soon divided the body, which was about four inches long and the two parts scampered away in different directions. He was then told by a Native who heard of his accident, "You do for bad to let him go so, for you cut him in pieces, and these make more centipedes, who bite you worse." As my friend could not find the pieces, it may be supposed he did not enjoy a very good nights' rest for some time after. A similar circumstance, years before, happened to myself whilst Garrison Chaplain at the Bahamas. I had requested the Hospital Sergeant to procure me one or two of these reptiles, which were to be met with very large about the hospital grounds. One morning, as I was sitting in my piazza, I

was favoured with a Quart Bottle of about a dozen of these Beauties. In examining my treasure I let the bottle fall. Away went the centipedes leaving us in fearful apprehensions for days after; for they were out of sight in a moment.

Bees are plentiful, and the honey they produce of a good flavour; but I have never seen them hive so numerously as in the Gambia. On one occasion of my visiting Regent, whilst staying at the Church Mission House, a swarm of bees settled in the cupboard in the parlour,—no doubt, attracted by the sweets placed there. At first myself and a friend who was with me were alarmed at such company, for they kept flying and buzzing around us in thousands. In truth, the room was full of them. We were quieted by our kind host's assurance that, if left alone, and not disturbed, they would not touch us. With some apprehensions we obeyed orders; and these busy little creatures certainly permitted us, in the most forbearing manner, to finish our dinner. Some days after they all took their departure.

CHAPTER XVI.

VISIT TO REGENT, AND VIEW OF FREE-TOWN FROM THE ASCENT OF THE ROAD AS YOU GO TO GLOUCESTER.—BURIAL-GROUND AND NEGLECTED STATE OF IT.—THE VILLAGE OF GLOUCESTER; REGENT: THE MISSIONARY CLERGYMAN'S RESIDENCE; FIRST GLASS WINDOWS: THE CHURCH: OLD BUILDINGS AND OLD DOINGS: THE MARKET HOUSE: THE DAY SCHOOL.—THE FIRST CHURCH MISSIONARY INSTITUTION AT REGENT.—GOVERNOR M'CARTHY'S TIMES.—PROSPEROUS COURSE OF MISSIONARY LABOUR HERE.—NATIVE SUPERSTITION.—INTERESTING ANECDOTE OF NATIVE ANXIETY TO LEARN.—THE SUGAR LOAF AND HEIGHT OF IT: LEICESTER MOUNTAIN: AN EXCURSION TO THE SUGAR LOAF: THE PARTY: THE BIVOUAC AT FRIEND THOMAS'S: THE ASCENT UP IT: ITS TOP: VIEW FROM IT: THE HOUR OF REFRESHMENT: PROOFS OF LOYALTY: THE WILD STRANGER: THE DESCENT, AND CLOSE OF THE DAY'S PLEASURE: SAD MISTAKE.

It was in the month of March, that, in company with my Little Friend of King Tom's I paid a visit to the Catechist then at Regent. The country from Free-town to this village has been slightly sketched. A word or two more about it may not be out of place. The road to it is by the Old Maroon burial-ground, through that part of the town which lies under the hills to the left of the

place of General Interment. It is extremely tiring owing to its being so steep and circuitous, but the view as you ascend it repays you for the trouble, since it opens in the most beautiful manner. For awhile you are enclosed on the left of the road by the sides of the mountains which are covered with shrubs and coffee-trees, whilst the deep and expanding valley below spreads itself out until lost amongst the distant elevations. As you move onwards to the top of the hill the vast champaign unfolds itself gradually before you, object after object appearing in succession in truly scenic style, until the immense amphitheatre of Nature and busy life is exhibited in one grand and unbroken prospect. Far as the eye can reach in the distance is the "deep and dark blue ocean." A little forest of masts fills the harbour. The inlets and outlets of the coast, the capes, the villages bordering the sea-shore, the bays and creeks leave no empty space in the more remote parts of the view, whilst myriads of huts interspersed with gardens, Streets either green with the Bermuda grass, or glaring with the red soil, the Bullom Shore, the winding River, the Race-Course, and more prominent buildings of the town stand out in bold relief on their different localities. It is a wonderful picture, and one has only to reflect what Sierra Leone was fifty years ago to awaken in

the beholder all the feelings of astonishment, gratitude and surprise at the progress of Civilization, Trade, and Christianity. What may not be anticipated of this colony in another half century through the blessing of Him who has declared all nations shall know Him from the least to the greatest!

There is but one spot in this rich landscape which casts a gloom upon the happiness which otherwise pervades the whole. It is that which is covered with so many tombstones, the last appointed place for man on earth! I could never contemplate this piece of ground, overgrown with rank grass, disturbed as it is by swine and cattle of every kind uprooting the graves, and despoiling this sanctuary of the dead, without emotions of indignation and sorrow. This burial-ground is exposed to every depredation from the animals which are continually straying about, having no other fence than a lime hedge fronting the road, the other sides of it being almost entirely open. I have myself seen the most revolting instances of desecration from the swine when I have been there on duty. If any one thing reflects on the cold and stoical indifference of persons to that redeeming quality in our nature which loves to respect the mortal remains of our fellow-creatures more than another, it is the supineness which has so long tolerated such a shameful neglect of the dearest

rights of humanity, and the misnamed economy which has found a way of dispensing with any scruples of conscience that might sometimes arise on this subject, on the plea of want of means. If but a fractional part of the immense sums which have been wasted at different times and to little purpose had been dedicated to the protecting the dust of man from continual profanation, the Grave-yard, where numbers of our Countrymen, Governors, Commandants, Officials, lie indiscriminately, without a tombstone to mark the place of their sepulture, would not be the neglected wilderness it now is. There is not so much as a shed at its entrance, where the Officiating Minister may robe himself, or find a shelter from the rays of the burning sun or pelting rain, whilst he awaits the arrival of the corpse, and this he has to do for sometimes two or three hours. A strong palisade, or rough stone wall would, if no better protection could be given to it, be better than leaving it as it is. And the Chain-gang, if the Public Chest is too poor to meet the expense of such a reasonable claim upon it as this, might be very usefully employed here as well as elsewhere, in clearing away the rubbish and overgrown bush and grass, and making cross paths of sufficient width and number to admit a dry and unobstructed path for the mourners. Nor would it be an undesirable ar-

rangement to have Numbers affixed, whereby, as in England, the spot of any particular interment might be ascertained. The Burial-ground is not exclusively attached to the Government Colonial Church as a freehold appendage to it, as is the case in general with Churches and Churchyards; and therefore, is open to all denominations, Christian or Heathen, or Infidel, for the reception of their dead. The Maroon burial-place, which is nearer the town, is walled in and kept in neat order. Here, however, interments are not permitted indiscriminately to every one, but only to very old residents and such persons besides those to whom the original right of exclusive sepulture belongs, as are considered deserving more than ordinary respect.

But to return to ourselves. After my Little Friend had discharged his duties at Gloucester we proceeded on to Regent. There is nothing remarkable at the former village: it contains a Church Missionary residence, has a neat Church, and a Government establishment for African children, which is conducted by a native school-master. The principal buildings stand on the top of the hill, and comprise those I have just named, The interior of the church is plain, and the clergyman's house many a poor curate in England would be glad to have (notwithstanding the cli-

mate), could he bring himself to believe that Missionaries in Sierra Leone are not without comforts and conveniences, nor averse to the rational indulgencies of a well-furnished home. Without wishing to deteriorate from my profession, I must remark, that so much is said and believed by some people, who, however, know very little about the matter, of the self-denial, privations, and sacrifices, made by us on the Western Coast, that it might be supposed we had given up fortunes and were constantly exposed to the severest hardships. These trials may be the lot of those who extend their labours far into the interior, but it is not so with them who are in the range of Free-town. Good houses, good salaries, and many advantages, unknown to the hard-working, educated, and not less zealous curate of the English village or hamlet, with his eighty or hundred pounds a year and half-starving family, fall to their lot; and I do not say undeservedly. But I believe, if these points were more universally known, if it could be entertained by many of our first-rate clergymen, that notwithstanding the disadvantages of climate, the Missionary's situation is so much better than it might be inferred, the extensive sphere of clerical labour in Sierra Leone would enjoy, probably not more sincere, but certainly more talented and superior men. And it deserves this, for the people of Africa,

from the progressive advancement they are making in knowledge and civilization, nay, from the very success which has hitherto rewarded our Missionary exertions to christianize them, understand and appreciate as well as we do ourselves, the power of superior acquirements, of educational refinement, and of that Christian liberality of views and opinions which belongs alone to the high-minded gentleman and will never suffer him to be betrayed by any weakness of his nature into any act or thought which may distress the feelings, or call in question the sincerity of others who may not think exactly on all things like himself.

Our friend, the Catechist then occupying the Clergyman's quarters during his absence in Europe, received and entertained us in the kindest manner for the night. The present Missionary residence there is well-built and very comfortable with every convenience, having a pretty flower and well-stocked kitchen garden. It rose into being under the management of one of the Church Missionaries, who was the first person to introduce Glass Windows into the colony. The first pane used in Sierra Leone was fixed by himself in a little room he used for study, and which before this improvement was comparatively useless, when the bad weather required the shutter to be closed. He was a good deal jeered about what he did, but he answered

very quietly all remarks made on the strange act, and observed to the speaker, that before many years, glass windows would be universally used in the colony, and they would see it, if alive. He did live to see his sensible improvement in a short time in general request.

The church is only parted from the parsonage by a yard and railing which encloses the dwelling-house. This and the church at Kent are two of the neatest modelled buildings of the kind in the colony; and the desk and pulpit of the former, which are made of English Oak neatly carved and highly polished, show the good taste as well as judgment of those who erected them. I wish St. George's church in Free-town could boast of taste as good. It is a pity that an edifice, otherwise so compact and suitable to the purpose as that of Regent, should not have an arched recess for the Communion Table, and the Altar within the railings enlarged, instead of being cramped as it is for room by being parted off and projecting from the flat wall. A vestry room might then be put on one side, and some trifling alterations would make it complete. The body of the church is wisely left open, except at the end opposite to the altar, where the children sit and sing. The attendance is most satisfactory, and speaks highly to the zeal and exertions of those who have the

spiritual care of the district. When I officiated there, which I did with real pleasure for a brother minister, there was a congregation of not less than a thousand people, and I administered the Communion to two hundred and fifty communicants. How sincerely do I wish that I could say I had ever seen so sweet an encouragement to my labours in the Colonial Church. My number of communicants have never exceeded, if they have been so many as fifty; and, for the congregation, five hundred I should say, were the most I have seen at the service, and not twenty of these Europeans.

This missionary station has many circumstances to commend it to general interest. It can claim associations with the past, both of a civil and ecclesiastical nature, which are to be found in the old ruins that lie scattered about it. Here formerly stood a capital government house erected at no trifling cost, which was ornamented with a lofty tower and enclosed by a wall of considerable extent. The remains of a noble church and gothic tower are also to be seen, which tell that the climate is as hostile to the works as to the body of man, and show how badly the buildings were constructed some years back, as well as what a mint of money has disappeared in brick and mortar inconsiderately and badly put together. An

English mason and bricklayer would smile to see the workmanship of those days, which may be easily estimated when it is known that the broad face of the brick appeared where the narrow part is now seen. This method arose in the Native idea that strength and appearance derived their qualifications from this manner of putting the material together. Nor was the masonry either solid. The hollow in the centre was filled up with rough stones and plaster thrown into it, and thus the eye was deceived with the look of something very substantial, but which soon yielded to the destructive ravages of the rains. One of the very few specimens of good masonry done before the last two or three years, is the Arch near the Entrance Gate to Government House.

The Doings, like the Buildings of olden days, have passed away. As little of the one is in the records of memory as of the other in the reality of substance. Yet that Market-house which now looks so dull with its few lean sheep and goats sheltering themselves from the sun under its shed, could doubtless tell of requisitions for table necessities, which made it once a place of busy occupation, when the standard of Old England waved from the tower of Governor M'Carthy's residence. There is an excellent day-school here, which is well conducted, and is amongst the other proofs of

what Christianity has done for the once wild inhabitants of Sierra Leone's deadly shores. Here, too, it is, that the Church Missionary Institution which has accomplished so many and such important benefits to the spiritual and temporal well-being of thousands of Africa's race,—for the real blessings of the world are inseparable from those of the Gospel,—was *first* commenced and established on this part of the coast. Here it was that all the animation and bustle, the pomp and ceremony of a little court enlivened this now quiet village, when the Governor was ushered in and escorted out every Saturday and Monday by the Officials belonging to his establishment. The consequences of such associations are not easy to be arrived at; we may come nearest the truth by concluding they were partial, producing most likely nearly an equal proportion of good and evil. For we must be sensible that European influence, properly directed, will produce, unquestionably, a greater proportion of good than the evil which unavoidably will issue from it, from a variety of causes moral and physical. And, probably, in this case, the balance was nearly poised between the opposite extremes of English and Native manners and habits. Whatever might be the moral effect of such intercourse, Civilisation would make its advances. I have already spoken of the fruits of missionary exertions here,

and, indeed, everything serves to show that both clerical and catechetical efforts to spread the glad tidings of the Gospel have not been made in vain. What so greatly delighted me was to notice the perfect simplicity and freedom from all religious ostentation and stiffness which stamped the devotions of the congregation.

Yet the Spirit of Superstition has not entirely withdrawn his hold from the minds of Africa's children. The chain, although lighter and less than it was, is nevertheless still upon them. Many are yet in bondage to the powers of darkness. The following circumstance is one of several which will confirm this fact:—A friend of mine happened to go into one of the huts, where a native was worshipping his idol. The idol-worshipper was seated on a mat spread on the ground, and in his hand was a spear-pointed knife. A number of fowl-bones lay scattered about the floor just before him; and he also held a string of them intermixed with a variety of seeds. On being asked what he was doing, he replied, somewhat sulkily, casting a look of suspicion at his interrogator, "Umph, ùmph," in country fashion. He was further questioned as to what those things were, when he said, "they were to do him good." The visitor pretended as if he would have laid his hands upon these Gris-Gris, or Charms, for

they were nothing more or less. "You no must not do that," he cried out. "What do these things mean?" resumed my friend. "This thing," observed the poor idol-worshipper, touching one of the bones, very seriously, "this thing, Daddee, tell me, suppose I go in canoe, I no can be drowned. Suppose I go bush, no stick go *chuke* me; no snake go bite me." Pointing to another bone, or seed, he continued: "this tell me that suppose men go shoot me, he no can do me harm, for shot no touch me." The visitor said, appearing surprised at what he had heard, "Indeed! Lend me that knife, Daddee." He did so, and my friend made as if he would have inflicted a wound on his arm. The native drew back, showing some fear and wonder, and when another pretended attempt was made to hurt him, he cried out "Massa, massa!" "Why are you afraid?" asked the visitor, smilingly; adding at the same time, "what place him eye live," and using this native talk: he answered, "I savez my heart go see him eye, but I no can point him out for you to see." My friend resumed: "What part him mouth stand?" and the native said, "me no savez that, but I hear him speak in my heart."

I once myself, in company with a gentleman, entered the yard of a female idol-worshipper, in another village. I was previously informed of

the fact, and resolved to try an experiment upon the superstition and sincerity of the woman. We found her sitting on a country stool, and kindly saluted her. I was then formally introduced to her by the gentleman, a government officer, well versed in African character as the "Big Parson of Free-town," for that is the cognomen by which the chaplain is known and spoken of amongst many of the poorer natives. We requested permission to look behind a white linen cloth, which hid from sight the interior of a little shed at the end of the yard, but were repulsed with a shake of the head and look, which told us her displeasure at being asked such a thing. I then moved forward and pretended I was hastening to the spot so sacred to secrecy, when she jumped up with a growl, and was about to interpose. I was perfectly satisfied with the fact of her superstition and the bigoted sincerity of it.

A further and very singular proof of the superstition yet extant in some degree amongst the poor natives is the idea so very prevalent and controlling, that, if a Country Doctor or Gris-Gris man wishes to do any one an injury, or cause him to commit a theft or other bad action, he has only to lay his charm in the road, or mark the place where the object of his ill-will is to pass, and no sooner is the spot crossed than the

effect is produced. A Wesleyan missionary, with whom I was on terms of intimacy, a shrewd man, informed me, that in a visit he was once called upon to pay a dying native he discovered an idol behind the sick man's pillow; the miserable victim of superstition would not have it removed, and the benefits of religious consolation could not therefore, possibly be applied to him in such a state of spiritual darkness.

A more pleasing and delightful trait of character, of quite a different complexion, and which was exhibited under very interesting circumstances, was once described to me by a friend on the coast who was himself concerned in the transaction which brought it to light. This gentleman had been preaching on the previous day to the people under his care. He was accosted by a native, one of the members of his charge, who said he wished very much to speak to him, and, on being asked the purport of his question, he told the person what he wanted, which was an explanation of a word he had heard, but could not understand. "Massa, massa," he exclaimed, "good morning, massa. You done speak, yesterday, one big word!" He was asked what it was. The inquirer continued; "Massa, I no can tell, but I want you to tell me what it is." The gentleman was altogether at a loss to conjecture

what the expression could be which had made such an impression on this simple but sincere convert to Christianity, and tried a variety of words, but without arriving at that which was the subject of explanation. "Is it *glory*?" asked the gentleman. The man said, "that bright for good, but that not the word."—"Is it *God*?" continued the gentleman. "I savez God be bright," answered the inquirer, "but that not the word."—"Is it *grace*?" pursued my friend. "I savez that," said the African, "in my heart," putting his hand upon it at the same time; "that be good, but it no be that." The gentleman was almost disheartened and ready to give up the inquiry, when he remembered having used the expression, *effulgence*. "Is it *effulgence*?" asked the gentleman. The word was scarcely spoken than, in an ecstasy of delight, and laughing for joy, the African exclaimed, "Yes, massa; yes, massa, that be *big word*: please tell me what that big word mean." To the best of his ability the person tried to make him understand its meaning by directing his attention to the rising sun, and other objects calculated to assist his mind in comprehending it, when the poor fellow observed, raising his eyes to heaven, and clasping his hands together, "Oh, massa, that just how we shall see God in heaven!"

Amongst the objects of Natural interest, for which Regent and its neighbourhood is remarkable, the Sugar-Loaf Mountain ranks the first. The height of it, reckoning from the floor of the gallery of the Missionary-house, is 2521 feet, the floor of the gallery just mentioned, is 9,836 feet above it.

The highest elevation next to this is Leicester Mountain, which is computed to be 1,954 feet above the ocean's level. I have never ascended the latter, but twice laboured up the Sugar-loaf. To make an excursion up this mountain is looked upon as a kind of exploit, and few have the inclination to undertake it; although it is said that one or two fair dames, of English blood, have shamed the hardier sex by indulging that harmless curiosity so natural to them. I admire their love of the grand and beautiful in nature; and believe our English women in general, on the coast at least, value, much more than ourselves, what is intellectually interesting and mentally improving. But the well known difficulties which present themselves to the excursionist in his ascent up this mountain, in the steep and slippery rocks which you have to get over, and from which, if a false step were heedlessly made, it would be difficult to say when your course would find a stop, must have perplexed the lady travellers.

I can only say, I speak feelingly on the subject ; for, on both occasions of my ascending the Sugar-Loaf, I found it indispensable to my safety to crawl up and slide down these places, as my vision is not of the steadiest when looking from any high point. This mode of travelling afforded a fund of merriment to my companions, who have never forgotten the ragged condition in which I descended. On the first occasion of my going up this mountain I was one of a small number of friends who had made up a party to see it. We mustered five or six, and started for Regent, the evening before, that we might rest, and be in readiness to commence our undertaking before sunrise ; for, to attempt it in the heat of the day, would be madness. Some of us occupied friend Thomas's quarters, the others did the best they could for themselves : the village was all life and curiosity. Our landlord was as happy as a man could be ; and what with his attentions and the previous care we had taken to be well provided with all necessaries, we feasted and slept well.

The morning came ; the messengers with the "grub" were sent forward, and extra labourers procured to get water for us. The bush had been cut away by the directions of the Manager, who, in this respect, proved of great service to us ; and thus a tolerable pathway up the most

^a rugged and overgrown parts of the ascent was cleared for us. We were all of us well matched, and seemed determined on achieving wonders : strong sticks, or rather poles, were supplied us to help us along the steeps, and it was agreed upon that the first who reached the summit should hail us who were on the march : but the start was not quite fair ; for two or three of our friends stole slyly forward and got a little in advance of us. However, we proceeded upon the expedition, with the good wishes of friend Thomas, and soon left the village beneath us. The greater part of the ascent we found easier than we expected, for both report and the appearance of the mountain had led us to anticipate some very hard work. True, it is a pretty good pull up, but a considerable portion of the beginning of the mountain consists of a kind of naturally made steps formed by the broken pieces and fragments of rock. As you advance, mountain upon mountain, and hill within hill, with their dells and precipices, their chasms and valleys, clothed in verdure and covered with bush and forest-wood, rise up before you ; and whenever you pause to rest and cast your eye upon the path you have traversed, as bold a scene as you would meet with anywhere is before you. On a fine clear day the Banana Islands, and every object to the distance of many miles, with their

intermediate villages, may be plainly seen from the top of the Sugar-Loaf. The river and its numerous windings, as well as the islets upon it, are also very picturesque, as observed from the different elevations, before even you gain the summit. The dense mass of trees rising one above another, up to the very level on which you stand, has, likewise, a very novel appearance.

It is not before you are within a few hundred yards of the height, that the steep becomes very abrupt and laborious to climb; and then you are shut out for a few moments by the wood and bush on each side of you from any view until you are fairly at your journey's end. But long before the majority of the party had finished their labours, three or four hurrahs were heard from the top, and, echoing amongst the hills, down into the vale below, proclaimed that some of them were as high as they could be. We were all soon met together after this notification,—messengers, water-carriers, labourers, and adventurers. The first thing was to duly make known to our acquaintances in Regent that our morning's walk was ended; and this we did in a rather extravagant manner, by pledging each other in a glass of champagne, with three as loud huzzas as six men's throats, with accompaniments, could roar out. This duty being performed, fires were kindled,

the boxes and blies were emptied of their contents; knives, forks, plates, and glasses, were tumbled out as expeditiously as possible, and preparations made for breakfast. We had been led to expect the loan of some Colours for the occasion, to hoist on the mountain's top, but being disappointed of this, some pocket-handkerchiefs were strung together and fastened to the topmost branch of the highest tree, to signalize to our friends in Free-town our triumph. With as little boasting as possible, I must inform my reader that our party was not only select, but admirably adapted in similarity of taste and disposition to make such a Maroon agreeable, and consisted of the following personages:—Germany sent forth one of her sons in the character of a Merchant; Scotland furnished a Doctor for us, who was supported by another worthy of his own profession, so that we were well provided against casualties; the Garrison supplied us with a capital Red Coat, and myself and another friend completed the company. In regard to refreshments, we fared sumptuously, and during the heat of the day kept under cover as much as we could, amusing ourselves in various ways according to our inclinations:—reading, smoking, sleeping, strolling occasionally into the bush, shooting at targets (for we were provided with guns, should a chimpanzee, perchance, or

better game offer itself to our aim) were resorted to as inclination prompted : but I do not remember that we met with so much as a pigeon.

At last, as if by deliberate consent, every one unanimously agreed that we should muster round the table-cloth, which now, for the second time, was laid on the grass for dinner, Turkish fashion. We sat down accordingly, and the honours of the table could not have been more satisfactorily discharged, or with more formality in a dining-room. Soon the ground around us presented a funny scene of empty bottles, dirty plates, tins cleared of their contents, cigar boxes, and all kinds of odd things. Fires were blazing away in the cause of cookery, and messengers and water-carriers, and two or three stragglers who had laboured up the mountain on speculation for a meal, like crows and ravens in quest of the remains, were sprawling on the ground at a respectful distance waiting for their turn.

Having done ample justice to the catering, we arose to finish our day's excursion by an act of Loyalty as dutiful subjects. Accordingly we were formed into rank by martial order, and our double-barreled guns being loaded, and the glasses filled, at the word of command three rounds were fired with as much precision as if we had been drilled for a month ; whilst the bumpers were emptied with equal correctness and rapidity. Three times

three and again, "The Queen and God bless her," resounded from rock to rock, and from hill to hill, until the hearty cheers swept along the open space below: whilst one long streamer of many handkerchiefs took gallant part in the rejoicing. I learned, afterwards, what greatly amused me, that our vociferations in pledging the Sovereign not only brought many out of their huts and houses, but drew forth several very original and amusing remarks, and obtained for us amongst the villagers their admiration and approval.

We were a little disappointed at not meeting with any animals or birds of interest, but in some measure were recompensed by the sight of as strange a looking personage as I ever beheld in my life, in the form of a man. As we were busily occupied, he came out of the bush which grows right up to the mountain's top, and stood silently before us, not speaking a word, but grinning in the most Satanic manner, with a wood-bill in his hand. It is impossible ever to forget the contour of that being's countenance, which was intelligent and even expressive, but lit up with such a smile of arch-cunning as no pen can adequately describe. There was a general roar of laughter when he was first perceived; but as I noticed his dark and leering eye rolling wildly and restlessly from object to object, his half clad form, which was short

and thick-set, but well and strongly built, his thick curly hair, and unshaved, I should say his bristly face, as he stood motionless and upright as a soldier before us, I could not divest myself of a disagreeable imagining. It is certain, however, he was no more than man, for his voice was human and really not unpleasant. It was also English language that he spoke, so I got a little reconciled to this wild stranger. His occupation was chiefly in the bush; how he earned his living, himself alone can tell! but he was glad enough to partake of what food we gave him, which he seemed, poor creature, to enjoy heartily.

We now commenced our descent, and returned to the village as quickly as we could, for the evening was closing upon us. I used the precaution of seating myself on the rocky and sloping flats, and sliding down to the surer footing. Others contrived to make the retreat more gracefully; and the Methodist Parson, to whom I tender my best expressions of regret for having omitted his name in the category of adventurers, displayed more agility than any of us, by trotting down the break-neck places we had to pass.

On arriving at our quarters in Regent we were welcomed back by old Thomas, who greeted us with the assurance that we had gained for ourselves, both as travellers and loyalists, the appro-

bation and applause of his countrymen. And we should have retired to our respective dormitories contented with ourselves and every one, but for a circumstance which caused us, as human beings, some uneasiness. A poor bushman had been shot by some countrymen prowling through the wood (as report went) for a chimpanzee. Whatever he was taken for, he fell a victim to the want of either that discriminating power which distinguishes one object from another, or a mistake which can be perfectly understood and believed by those who have seen some of the lowest species of negro, and the highest species of that animal just mentioned.

CHAPTER XVII.

RIDE TO BATHURST AND CHARLOTTE.—MISSIONARY HOUSE AND CHURCH AT BATHURST.—MANAGER'S RESIDENCE AT CHARLOTTE.—REFLECTIONS.—VILLAGE CHURCHYARDS.—FUNERALS.—UNBECOMING MANNER OF REMOVING CORPSES FROM LODGING-HOUSES.—SOME SUGGESTIONS ON THIS SUBJECT.

It is time to return to my Little Friend, from whom our excursion up the Sugar-Loaf has parted us for a short time. After breakfasting at Regent we proceeded to Bathurst, about an hour's ride, and called at the Church Missionary House there. The Reverend Mr. Schmid and his lady received us very kindly, and showed us every attention. We passed an agreeable hour with them, and then continued our journey to the next village, which is Charlotte. The Clergyman's residence, which is a pretty-looking abode, stands close to the road, but, unfortunately for health, as I should think, not sufficiently raised from the ground. The Church is in an enclosure on the other side of the road, nearly opposite to the Parsonage. From Regent to Bathurst the scenery loses nothing of its wild and bold character, and your way

is along a road abounding in striking views and landscape beauty; but it is in continuing your route to Charlotte from the last place that Nature clothes herself in sublimity. The imagery of her pencilling, the dashing strokes of her rich colouring, the softer mellowings of her tints, the grandeur of her outline of nearer objects deserve a master's hand, writer or painter, to do her justice. Lofty mountains, in parts inaccessible, down whose fertile sides roll the cataract's noisy yet harmonious waters, leaping in sprayful sport over the rocks which cross its course, or sweeping in sheets of sparkling foam into the ravines pointed with the multiform and fantastic shapes, which seem to welcome the stream from above, greet you as you advance, until ascending an angular and sudden rise to the left, you find yourself at the dwelling of the Manager. Here we rested and dined off stewed fowl and Cassada; and I took the opportunity of exploring the place during my Little Friend's absence on his duties. The extent and nature of the Local Government buildings bespeak there, as in other districts, the same enormous expenditure which has been made in its Establishments for the good of Africa, and the unsubstantial and unworkmanlike manner in which they have been erected. It appears to have been the custom some years ago to erect buildings on a

most extensive and expensive scale in most of the districts for official purposes. The ruins of these establishments will speak for themselves ; but the sums they must have required in their erection and preservation would make a better show in the Colonial Chest, than they do now in the unserviceable piles of brick and mortar which are mouldering away to nothing.

Yet it must not be imagined that all this outlay has not been attended with some beneficial results. It is doubtless in the power of some of the older residents of these places to prove, from an impartial comparison of the state of things past with things present, that benefits in a civil and religious point of view, to a great degree, have been conferred on the inhabitants of these populous districts. If, as will be the case in similar efforts to humanize a barbarous race, useless wants and pernicious habits have grown up imperceptibly together in the progress of civilization and education, it must be attributed, partly to that desire for imitation so common to the African, but which cares little to distinguish what is worthy of copying and what is not, but more particularly to the mischievous examples which it is painful, but only just to say, is too generally set by Europeans to those amongst whom they settle in Foreign lands ; and I am entirely of opinion with the

Honourable Author of "Four Years in the Pacific," that too much of the immorality and licentiousness which prevail in colonies, whose interest is espoused by European philanthropy, is to be laid to the account of European laxity of morals.

But see that pretty retired spot along the road side ! The hand of care has not allowed the straggling creeper or intrusive wild grass to grow there. The trees enclose and bend their boughs and branches over it, dropping their leaves gently on the little mounds which here and there disclose themselves ! It is a Burial-Ground ; for there are the white tombstones with their records of sorrow and worth to mark where Colonist and Native sleep undistinguished together. These places of death and mortality are almost invariably, and most wisely, set apart at some little distance out of the habitations of the living, and are not without their share of melancholy interest. In the spots where they are generally seen they make a sensible impression on the passer-by.

The Natives pay very great attention to the funerals of their deceased friends, whose interments, so far as I can venture on my own observation to speak of them, are conducted with more solemnity and outward respect than those of Europeans in general. The number of the persons who make up the processions, the respectability

of them, the style of dress and behaviour, show that they think more of this last office to departed man than we do in most cases. They take great pains in laying out the dead; and their Funeral Feasts and Wailings for the departed are customs in which they go into extremes. To be in the neighbourhood any where near to them when they are going on is excessively annoying, as they are kept up until a late hour. I have witnessed some very distressing scenes at funerals, where the chief mourners, when females, have carried their outward expressions of grief to a most extravagant pitch, screaming and violently venting forth their sorrow between two of their friends who lead them away.

The heat of the climate does not permit, as a matter of safety, that the Interment of Bodies should be postponed beyond twenty-four hours, as a general rule. Yet there can be no reason whatever for the indecorous and hasty manner in which many poor fellows, particularly our European and Merchant Sailors are hurried from the Lodging-houses where they die to the Churchyard. For some time after my arrival in the Colony I was continually shocked at the indecent haste with which the dead were removed from where they died, and the slovenly manner in which they were conveyed to their graves. As I have been standing

at the entrance of the Church-yard waiting for the corpse, I have seen it borne along by four ragged Natives, at a jog-trot, without any covering, and the coffin little better than some rough boards just nailed together. Sometimes, so eager are the Lodging-house keepers to get rid of their charge, they would either take the remains and carry them to the place of burial before apprizing me of what they were doing, or anticipating the appointed hour, considerably before the time would coolly place the coffin at the outside of the gate in the road, and leave it. I was once obliged to walk twice to the Churchyard to read the Burial Service and return; on going the third time the fellows had left their burden, (and it was late in the evening,) and the coffin was not so much as properly closed. As no name nor particulars were sent me about the deceased, I could only have the remains put into the tomb and read the service by daylight the next morning.

Some very considerable reformation is needed in the management, generally, of Lodging-houses, and particularly in relation to the Burials of those who die in them. As the present system is carried on, it not unfrequently happens that I am unable to procure any particulars of the Name, Age, or other circumstances of the deceased, so as to register them correctly. Nor does it occur that once

in fifty times that I am sent for to see them whilst ill, although my duty is to visit them if acquainted with their sickness. I might, consequently, enter a body, where it ought to have undergone a previous examination, and not been buried without a Coroner's warrant. Great inconvenience to surviving relatives and friends might also arise at a future period, in not being able to obtain any, or but an imperfect certificate of death and burial. A notice of so many hours should be required by Local Statute to be given to the Minister, together with the Name, Age, and Business of the deceased, as correctly as possible, and also an Order for Burial from such Official, properly drawn out and signed, as might be named for such a duty. This would secure to the public the more becoming solemnization of the Last Rites to man, prevent any future trouble should any doubts about the manner or fact of a person's death arise, and enable the clergyman to officiate with less annoyance to himself and more satisfaction to the community. I very much question if any bell is regularly tolled when these poor strangers and sailors die, or when they are taken to their resting-place. It is altogether thought unnecessary to have them carried into the Church before interment; and I know of only one exception, which was in the case of a young man who died when I was sick of fever. Twice

I recommended the importance of having the remains of a gentleman and official taken into the church, that the most consolitary and sublime part of the service might not be lost, but it was not considered of any consequence. It does not arise from apprehensions of any danger of the body that this indifference to the finest portion of our Ritual prevails, but from a neglect of, and insensibility to the value of all Religious Services and Ordinances too perceptible in a certain class, and which is the result of a contempt of God and His Commandments.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SUBJECT OF FUNERALS CONTINUED. — SAD ACCIDENT FROM EXPLOSION OF ROCKETS. — OPINIONS ON CLIMATE. — PROVISIONS AGAINST SICKNESS; MEDICAL DEPARTMENTS; HOSPITALS AND LUNATIC ASYLUM. — MY FIRST FEVER; EFFECTS OF IT ON MIND AND BODY. — SOME SUGGESTIONS ABOUT LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

IN speaking of funerals I must not pass over a circumstance which is characteristic of native peculiarities; and it is this. — Whilst reading the burial service over the body as it was lowered into the grave, somebody came forward and respectfully let down a small bundle covered with a clean white linen napkin on the lid of the coffin. I was told, afterwards, that it was the remains of one of the infant children of the deceased, but could not learn for what reason this was done.

The most melancholy duty in this way which has devolved upon me since I became Chaplain in Sierra Leone, was the interment of several soldiers who fell victims to a fearful explosion which happened near to Government House, and might have occasioned an awful destruction of life and property. But it was sufficiently alarming.

A number of soldiers were employed in breaking up some Congreve-rockets on the hill leading to the Military Hospital and Barracks, not far from a large tree which is known to every one in the town, and only a few yards from the Magazine where such combustibles are kept. This Magazine is parted off from the residence of the Governor by nothing more than a yard, and is but a little distance from it. The case is particularly distressing in many features of it, yet marked by strong indications of Providential Interposition, which mercifully limited the work of destruction to what it was. One of the men employed at the work was a very troublesome fellow, and had been two or three times warned by the non-commissioned officer who superintended the soldiers not to play with and strike the rockets so violently as he was doing. Regardless of what was told him, and making some impertinent reply to his officer, the wretch repeated his blows with greater force, which caused the rocket he had in his hand to explode. This communicated instantly with the heap of like combustibles on the ground, and twenty unfortunate creatures with the author of the accident, were blown into the air. I was returning home along the road which skirts the green, on which Government House stands, and not far from it, when the explosion took place. The report did

not startle me as I should have thought it would have done : which, no doubt was owing to the open space and unobstructed room afforded for the expansion of the powder. It was enough, however, to make me turn sharply around, when I saw an immense volume of smoke curling itself upwards in the air in dark clouds, and observed what I supposed at the time were the fragments of some material which had been destroyed. Alas, it could have been nothing else than the bodies of the unfortunates who had been sacrificed to the wicked stubbornness of one bad man. This I knew not at the moment; but soon after I got home, the crowds which were hurrying up to the hill led me to look out at my window, and I then saw some of the poor creatures borne away to the hospital. At the instant, to have offered any spiritual comfort would have been untimely interference with the Medical Officers. I waited until the panic and horrors of the accident had in some degree subsided, when I went to the hospital. One of the victims was then breathing his last. Not one of the number survived the catastrophe; and the mutilation and disfigurement of the faces and bodies were truly horrible. Of those who died from this explosion, two caused more than common sympathy. One of them a most respectable young man, a clerk, I think, in some department of the service, lost his

life in his anxiety to prevent any communication with the magazine, which was obliged to be open on the occasion. In his eagerness to get to the gate leading to it he stepped over a pile of the rockets, which, igniting at the moment, decided his fate for ever. Another, one of the soldiers, had either just received his discharge and order for pension, or was expecting it daily—he lingered after all the others, but only to follow them to their untimely graves. The wretch who did all the mischief most justly received his reward, and fell with the rest. An officer had the narrowest possible escape ; he had just been looking at the men to see that all was right, and was scarcely in safety-distance from the spot of destruction, when the tragedy occurred.

Some of the rockets took a good range, and, as it was said, fell in the sea. Had the Magazine caught fire, the loss of life and property would, in all probability, have been immense. It is not possible, indeed, to calculate the extent of mischief which might have followed ; it could not have been trifling ; and perhaps more than half the town, consisting as it does of so many huts of light construction and inflammable material, would have fallen a sacrifice to fire.

It is unnecessary almost to add, in reverting to this painful occurrence, that public excitement

and alarm were, as well they might be, at their height. The causes of the mishap were severely, and probably not very calmly canvassed. No blame whatever, I believe, could be attached to those whose sole and positive duty it was to obey orders, and see them, which they did, carried out properly according to instructions. Without presuming myself to so much as to hint where censure might be deserved, I would only observe, it is deeply to be regretted that any combustible matter should be lodged so near the Government House and town; that such a dangerous work should have been carried on where it was; and that such unsafe and destructive articles should in the first place have been brought at all to be broken up in the vicinity of such a population.

Eleven of the sufferers were interred in one day. A brother clergyman buried seven, and myself four of them. It was, truly, a piteous and heart-rending sight to watch the long train of bodies so prematurely hurried out of the world, and in so shocking a manner, borne to the churchyard to their last resting places, and hear the drums and fifes shrilly playing their death-march. Of those I buried, three of the bodies were placed on one bier; the fourth by itself. My situation at this time was trying. No clerk, nor sexton, was present on the arrival of the funeral party; the crowd was op-

pressive ! I begged the Serjeant-Major to take the clerk's place, which he kindly did. Placing myself as central as I could between three of the graves, I proceeded with our sublime Service for the Dead, and endeavoured to nerve myself to give all the solemnity I could to make the scene instructive to the living. It was useless. I was not, as generally, self-possessed. Oh ! it was an impressive spectacle ! A dead silence prevailed ; every one looked sad ; and not a sound was heard but the voice of those officiating, except that of the dust dropping on the coffins, and a few hard-drawn heavy sighs, which came like knells upon our ears. The soldiers received their last honours ; and, as the echo of the musquetry died away in the surrounding hills, I proceeded to inter the fourth body. A vault had been opened for the reception of it ; but as some delay took place owing to the aperture not being large enough to admit the corpse, it had to be laid on the grass whilst more of the stone-work was broken away. What with the people who thronged about the sepulchre, the crying of the friends, and the length of time it took to get the entrance of the vault widened, I found it no little effort to get through my duties.

But these serious casualties do not teach the lessons which they ought, nor produce those salu-

tary impressions which might be expected from them in a land where, in the beautiful words of the poet,

“Semper patet janua mortis.”

and—

“Over them triumphant Death his dart
Shakes, but delays to strike.”

People in Sierra Leone, as in other places where deaths are frequent, become, I suppose, so habituated to hear of them, that they regard them as every-day matter-of-course events, which concern them but for the moment, and then are to be forgotten, as if they themselves were neither liable nor subject to the power of the Grim Tyrant.

The topics which we have been just discussing naturally lead us, in the ordinary course of reflection, to inquire into the subject of the Unhealthiness of the climate, to learn what provisions are made for the Sick, the strength and adequacy of the Medical department to the emergencies of the colony, and to say something about Hospitals. Like every other natural or local evil, the first of these questions is resolved in too hasty and illogical a manner, without giving it a fair and dispassionate examination. The bills of mortality which are read as coming from that colony, and are without doubt very appalling, so paralyse with terror the minds of those who peruse or hear of them, that

they give themselves up to the unargumentative conclusion, that it is no good to reason upon the point, that it would be a *reductio ad impossibile* so much as to attempt making non-residents believe that it was possible to live at all in Sierra Leone. This is not dealing with the subject in a way consistent with the principles of common justice, or conducive to the ultimate attainment of something like a rational explanation of the question.

The Fatality of the climate to European health and life cannot be in the least disputed. That it is, also, irrelative of all extraneous circumstances arising out of individual indiscretion and in defiance of the most prudent measures to compete with and resist its effects, most destructive of European and even Native life, will, I should say, be admitted by five out of six who can judge upon the subject. And, until the Local Causes of unhealthiness, the Indigenous Provocatives to mortality are removed, no isolated opinion nor favourite theory will abolish the fact, too experimentally known and too frequently witnessed, that it merits the title of a Land of Death! That precautionary measures are more indispensable there than in many other parts of the world to ensure anything like a tolerable chance of escaping with your life, is admissible. This is to say no more than ad-

vise people to exercise additional caution in a town or country where a contagious disease is raging. It alters not the fact, however, that the disease itself is there, and in all its virulence, when its effects are continually perceptible. Imprudence will, of course, accelerate in any place, and with any prevailing cause of sickness and death, its fatal consequences; and the neglect of such methods as are most adapted, and perhaps only adapted, to stay or keep off the evil cannot but lead to its invariable effects. Yet the exceptions, I should imagine, to the general and primary tendency of the climate to destroy health and life, arising out of such examples, instead of explaining away anything of its dreaded character, rather assist in confirming the original proposition.

On the other side, again, to be so completely hurried down the stream of popular prejudice, and so mastered by the shock which is given to the mind by the actual unhealthiness, and even well-accredited deadliness of Sierra Leone, as to come to such conclusions as, that neither remedy nor preventives, nor prudence, nor constitutional qualifications, nor acclimatizing, are of any avail to mitigate or lessen the mischief, is talking like a child. Not only do persons live there, but live to a good age, enjoy health, and thus afford living proofs that no rule is without its exception. And

what may not be hoped for under the Divine blessing, from attention to drainage, cleanly habits, well ventilated and airy houses; the introduction and common use of glass windows; the removal of all decomposed vegetable matter, and those many other artificial and scientific resources, which are now continually pouring themselves into the colony?

A short remark may serve to close these reflections. The healthiest and most careful person may become a victim, on very short notice, to the climate; the most reckless and dissipated may survive for years those acts of madness which kill the majority; the most delicate may be spared to see the most promising longevity shortened in a few hours. So much for the unhealthiness of Sierra Leone!

Every assistance, however, which can be in requisition to resist and repel so formidable an enemy, is provided in the ready supply of medicines, and the numerical strength as well as ability of the Profession. It was a wise and humane policy to increase the Medical department, which has been done of late years; for with all the talent and zeal of the Old Standards, the Professional body was not numerically sufficient to contend with the unceasing claims on their time and attention, and Fever cases, I believe myself correct in saying, require

constant watchfulness in their various and dangerous changes. The Garrison is now supplied, generally, with two or three; those on the colonial list muster three; there was one attached to the Church Missionary, and the Colonial Apothecary was himself, before taking the last office, the Assistant Colonial Surgeon, and of many years' hard experience; so that Sierra Leone is not wanting in this essential. The medicines are, moreover, supplied at very reasonable prices, which leaves it quite unnecessary, and, in my opinion, not altogether quite equitable, for any other than himself to sell them in the colony, unless it may be a private speculator. For the time and trouble incident to the fulfilment of dispensing medicines, the little trust there is to be placed in the assistants which the Colonial Apothecary is obliged to employ, entitle him to some consideration in this respect from the public.

The Hospitals consist of that which is employed for Military and Naval purposes; an Establishment for patients at the village of Kissy, with an additional building, set apart lately, nearer the sea, for sick people; and something, I fancy, of a similar kind at Wilberforce, on the hill. There is also at the first of these establishments a room for lunatics, who present a most deplorable and sickening spectacle of this kind of human affliction. I once

looked through the grating at them ; and one sight of such wretched objects was sufficient to satisfy whatever curiosity had previously raised in me a desire to see them. The duties devolving upon the officer who has to attend to Kissy Hospital are very responsible and arduous ; and from the opportunities which were frequently afforded me in my visits to that gentleman, of judging how they were discharged, I should say they never were nor could be more satisfactorily performed than by Dr. Clarke. Nor have I a doubt but that my veteran friend in the service, Dr. Aitkin, the Colonial Surgeon, will grant him this meed of praise which I here gladly pay him. Indeed it would be withholding from the whole of the Medical Profession in Sierra Leone their due claims on the public acknowledgment, not to bestow the most liberal praises on their skill, attention, and readiness at all times to administer to the wants of sufferers of every description. I have ample reason to be grateful to them, when I consider that by the Divine blessing they have got me through *three most dangerous and nearly fatal attacks of illness.*

My first fever, or what is commonly called my Acclimatizing fever, I shall never forget. I have frequently thought of it since with varied feelings of gratitude and horror. It was terrible in its effects, both in prostrating the animal faculties and dis-

ordering the mental powers. The first symptoms themselves of this frightful malady, were worse than anything I had before experienced. There is the insidious forerunner of it—that lassitude, which can only be experienced to be understood—that dejection which cannot be explained. Then the unavoidable dread inspired by the thought of what you are going to suffer,—of what you may soon be—but an empty name! And, if the country you have left has a home to which you are wedded by domestic and paternal ties; if memory has to struggle with the embittering thought that dependence and poverty are but synonymous terms, should fever do its wonted work—then it is only a wonder that Madness does not make you one of her sad children. Oh, to lay your head on your pillow of trouble and pain; to undergo, what is worse than fever itself as it steals upon you with its dry and burning heat, the wild and unconnected workings of the brain, the strange fancyings and misgivings of thought as it rapidly hurries you from object to object of the past, connecting them incoherently together and embodying what is with what is only imagined, is the intensity of suffering! If the cares of office, or slightings of unkindness, or anxieties of business, or any other cause of mental disquietude, have fallen upon you, the distressing restlessness and irritability which are pro-

voked by these things is very great; and to these I was a sad martyr. Having in a great measure rallied from the first attack, I tried change of place, and went to Wilberforce; but, relapsing, I was soon compelled to return to Free-town.

The prejudice which I imbibed against my residence at this time, and ever after, is such as it has not been in my power to conquer to this moment. Yet it was a capital house which I rented, only rather gloomy in appearance and situation. I had scarcely been carried up stairs when it appeared necessary, from the state I was in, to hold a consultation; and by the assistance of the officers of the garrison, and the aid of the worthy governor, who attended me the whole time, I was taken to the Barracks, where I had the most earnest desire to be carried. It is needless and uninteresting to my reader to dwell on weeks of protracted suffering, bodily and mental; after all hope of saving me was at an end,—and that I could discern, for I was quite sensible although unable to speak,—a most unexpected change took place, and ultimately led to my recovery. The unceasing attentions and affectionate offices of my military and many civic friends will ever be remembered by me with gratitude. I am at a loss to know if I am indebted to others. It is curious that the very same restlessness and anxiety to leave the Barracks, when con-

valescing possessed me as in the onset of the fever; and nothing would satisfy me but to be taken away again to a friend's house in the town. This feeling, however, was but temporary. My first house I would never occupy again for the value of it; but I have often since that time enjoyed, and hope whilst in the colony to repeat, the many pleasant and happy hours and days I have passed with my friends in the garrison.

It is the tedious process of your getting well that is so trying; as well as the tantalizing and painful obstacles which the process of that horrible method of salivating, in its effects, opposes to the indulgence of your appetite, when returning strength begins to crave for its accustomed support. This is almost as bad as the necessity which appears to call for it. When sufficiently equal to the exertion, I was sent home on a medical certificate; and a few months in England did a great deal towards recruiting my strength. But the error in this particular is, that the Leave of Absence is not of sufficient length to benefit either the Invalid or the Service. For just as the change is beginning to produce its good, the patient has to return to the Coast; and it is almost a marvel if he is not soon invalided again and compelled to a Second Leave, unless, as is most probable, he falls a victim to the Fever. Two years should be the

shortest time granted in such cases; and every official ought to have the option of returning to England for one twelvemonth every three years, ill or not, if he likes, on a third of his pay, if he can get his place properly supplied.

These remarks may, perhaps, not be thought altogether undeserving of consideration. At any rate, so long as it is found expedient, or continued to be the practice, to send out Europeans to fill Official Situations on such a coast as Western Africa, and to retain them in such employments, any reasonable plan which is likely to benefit the public service on the one hand, and the public officer on the other, to the advantage of both, is not unworthy a careful inquiry. And stated periods of service, as short as could be fixed consistent with the exigencies of public claims, on some such scale as that above suggested, might be found both practicable and conducive to Individual Safety and the General Interest.

CHAPTER XIX.

SOME SINGULAR FEATURES IN MY FIRST ILLNESS.—INDUCING CAUSES TO FEVER AND REMARKS THEREON.—THE SOCIAL CONDITION OF THE COLONY HOSTILE TO MENTAL QUIETUDE AND THEREFORE TO HEALTH.—SOCIETY GENERALLY CONSIDERED.

I HAVE adverted in the last chapter to my first attack of fever, and the effects which it produced on my mind and body. A sea-voyage, however, did wonders for me in a fortnight; and I am inclined to think, in a great measure, served to bring about my convalescence. The change which it wrought in one invalid was astonishing. He was, I believe, carried on board; at all events, I saw him on his sofa, in the most pitiable state of debility. A few days of the ocean breeze made him, like myself, a different person altogether.

There are some singular features in the case of my illness, to which I have often reverted since that trying affliction. My own impression is, that I caught the fever from attending a poor fellow who was seized with it, and ultimately became its prey. I was dining at a gentleman's, and in the

course of the evening it was signified to me that the captain of a vessel consigned to him was seriously ill, and it would be desirable for him to see some minister and make his will, as he was a family man. The gentleman asked me if I had any apprehensions in visiting him; to whom I answered in the negative, expressing at the same time my desire to fulfil a duty, which it was my office, regardless of consequences to myself, to discharge. The sufferer was, indeed, in a frightful state of fever; his whole appearance jaundiced; and the burning hand, which I took in mine, was too significative not to be conclusive of what was soon to happen. With great difficulty we assisted him to do the last act of his life. I saw him once again, and no more, until I read over him the last rites of the Church.

Subsequently to this I was called upon to administer religious consolation to a young daughter of one of the officers of the garrison, who was also sick of the fever. She died of it; and not very long after I became invalided, and was "laid down." One of the medical officers who attended me was himself not long after attacked with the same disorder, and suffered most severely. If I am not mistaken, his mind experienced for a time a shock similar to what, as I have already stated, mine underwent.

These circumstances naturally lead to an interesting and important question, whether the Fever is not both Contagious and Infectious. Be this as it may I hope it will not be considered presuming in me to give an opinion in regard to Fever. I have heard Professional men say, what I have known to be true from painful experience, that *Fear* and *Mental Disquietude* induce as well as increase the violence of the Disease, and also retard its cure. The serious consequences of these inducements to illness therefore should be ever borne in mind by those, who, with more nerve than others but less thoughtful of the mischief of jesting on a very exciting topic, are often too fond of making that a subject of merriment before individuals, on whose sensitive nature such indiscretion has been known to produce the most fatal results.

It may not be out of place to explain away an erroneous opinion, which is very prevalent amongst those who are unacquainted with the colony, concerning the character of the fever which generally seizes the unacclimatized residents. It is supposed that this fever is what is ordinarily called the "Yellow Jack," and which is accompanied with "Black Vomit." It is no such thing in the generality of those cases, where we "pay our footing," as it is so expressed by nurses of

those who have to go through the ordeal of initiatory sickness. An understanding of this distinction is no trifling alleviative to those sad apprehensions, which the thought of so terrible an enemy to life as real yellow fever may, without surprise, excite in the most fortified mind. Too much care cannot, indeed, be taken to dispossess persons, of every idea tending to create alarm, when it is recollected that life itself, and with its preservation or destruction, the happiness and dependence, or misery and destitution of so many are connected !

It is a remarkable fact, but I believe well authenticated, that old residents and persons advanced in years not unfrequently die of the epidemic. These are, however, isolated instances of it ; for the yellow fever is, I think I may safely affirm, a periodical visitor, appearing about every interval of six or seven years. Moreover, I have heard it said, that fatal as the climate is and dangerous as the common fever proves in many cases, yet death would not occur from even these causes so often if invalids would be more careful to avoid relapses, by not venturing too soon on the strength of their convalescence, which when once it begins is known to be more rapid than certain in its continuance. It requires a much longer time to recruit sufficiently for any vigorous mental effort or physical

exertion than might be imagined. The greatest precaution, therefore, is demanded on the grounds alone of humanity, to avoid giving any reason for uneasiness, on the score of public duties or private business, to patients, until it is ascertained unequivocally that they are fit for the resumption of their occupations. It is deeply to be regretted that this consideration is not always, or so much as it should be, kept in view by officials one towards another. I can only say as regards myself, that amongst the incentives to protracted suffering, tedious recovery, and, most probably, in the first place incipient fever, the chief and greatest were those which arose from mental disquietude. Fear I knew not, for I had deliberately balanced the odds against me in the scales of life and death. And I can account it little short of insanity for any one to volunteer a service to Sierra Leone, if he suffer himself to labour under an undue influence of this nature,—I mean, a fear unqualified by that overruling government of the reflective powers of the mind and support of religion, which only can make the adventurer sufficient master of himself so as to resist successfully so formidable and predisposing a cause of illness. Death is every man's lot; and it is never more desirable than when submitted to in the path of Christian and Public duty. And when honour and integrity accompany us in it to

the end of our career, we may well apply to ourselves the poet's words—

“Non omnis moriar ; multaque pars mei
Vitabit Libitinam.”

At the same time, as it is well known to every one acquainted with the routine of official business in colonies, the cares and annoyances of office so different in its responsibilities abroad and at home, are of themselves almost insufferable. Is it not then more than a cruelty, and little less than a sin, to aggravate directly or indirectly by any means these harassments? Nothing ought to be omitted, on the contrary, which can lessen those trials, and ease as much as possible the onus of officials: and thankful shall I be, if these humble remarks, offered with the best intentions and originating in a just necessity, may serve to induce officials to bear and forbear more than they do with each other, instead of straining a power they may possess over others, by exercising it in displays of superiority or acts of litigious and vexatious interferences. For if there be one annoyance more intolerable than another, or more likely to provoke that mental disquietude which I have spoken of, it is that disposition to be continually censuring, or arrogating, or else inventing, if it is not possible to find out, some real cause of animadversion or contention.

It is for this reason that society, in its relative bearings in Sierra Leone, has such a direct and powerful tendency to disturb that serenity of thought and reflection so indispensable to mental quietude, because those persons who compose it either forget or are ignorant of that wise maxim, "Know thyself," and are thus so frequently and easily drawn into the commission of those acts of petty annoyance, which keep them in a perpetual ferment.

It might be concluded that on a spot of earth such as the Colony I am describing, where health and life are not certain for a day ; where comforts are few, and those resources so needful to render life worth living and society desirable so scant, nothing would be intentionally omitted which promised to make intercourse acceptable. And for the same reasons one would suppose everything would be as studiously avoided which threatened in the remotest degree to mar the unity and concord of neighbourhood. But the colonists of Sierra Leone know from their own experience in the most common transactions, that they have yet to learn those lessons of prudence and wisdom which teach men to do unto others as they would that men should do unto them. To speak the truth, society is generally and radically bad ; bad in its tastes, dispositions, morality, inclinations, and principles.

Confidence is wanting, without which mutual trust cannot exist. There are "rats" continually "behind the arras," from whose foul and contaminating movements you are never entirely free. That despicable species of a rational creature, which can find both pleasure and advantage in becoming the miserable and unenviable instrument of detraction and disparagement to others, thrives in Sierra Leone on the favours and rewards which an easy conscience finds it neither difficult to offer nor receive. The most contemptible of all the proofs of a bad heart and little mind, the treachery and meanness which can descend to violate the rights of hospitality, and disregard that sacred barrier which privacy has cast around the individual and domestic dwelling, are amongst the worst traits of character society there discloses. The friend in heart, the honest neighbour, the harmless acquaintance, are social blessings which may be found, but they are rare, and little appreciated in that community. Even with those whom similarity of profession recognises, and a bond of fellowship of a character superior to that commonly made by ordinary associations, and which might be expected to be proof in a great measure against such weaknesses and culpabilities, I have, I am sorry to be obliged to declare it, discerned little or nothing to except them from that unamiable failing so uni-

versally prevalent. Identity of occupations, however, it is certain, although invested with the imposing badges of external sanctity, does not prove any security against acts of human weakness or human viciousness. And it is melancholy to perceive a defalcation in the practice of even the least of the duties and obligations of morality or religion, where an ostentatious and distinctive claim is made to the observance of them. The true delineation of society in Sierra Leone is this, that on the broad view of men and manners, without doubt, every one is for himself, but without any of the better and mitigating features of selfishness, which sometimes assist a little to soften down the odious asperities of its nature. It cannot, therefore, be a matter of surprise that there should be so many exciting causes for mental disquietude, and that these should operate so fatally as they do in hastening sickness and accelerating its course, as well as in counterpoising the means employed for its removal.

Party spirit prevails in the extreme; not that party spirit which is generated by conscientious political or religious differences, but which emanates in envy, hatred, malice, and the worst of motives. Intrigues, combined with secret distrusts and party jealousies, make people almost afraid of

offering a remark or expressing an opinion, lest misconception or misconstruction of it, more frequently intentional than accidental, involve you in disputes and subject you to endless vexations. The most spotless character is not safe; and yet the most unblushing immorality is tolerated to an extent and with an effrontery which can only be equalled by that hardness of heart which accounts for it. There is not so much as the modesty of shame to disguise the sin of an illicit passion. Virtue may, without the slightest aberration from truth, be said to be brow-beaten by Vice in Sierra Leone. Such, indeed, is the state of Society for the most part that you feel yourself uncomfortable in the company of persons, because you are at a loss to be assured that you are safe; and, consequently, in self-defence you are often compelled to put on a reserve unnatural to your true disposition and inimical to all social happiness and enjoyment. To such lengths is the System of Deterioration carried, that the purest motives are questioned, the most disinterested actions traversed, the strict and faithful discharge of duty evil-spoken of, and the most sincere and devoted zeal qualified by an invidious remark or ill-natured reference to some little foible or failing. Nor are there wanting, it is to be deplored, those who are ever too ready to lend a willing ear to whatsoever detracts

from worth. The mischievous and unprincipled use sometimes made of this dangerous and unchristian propensity has led, as might be expected, to results of the most distressing and serious nature. Indeed the Buyers and Sellers of Character are amongst the greatest and worst plagues of the community; and it is melancholy to reflect that a meanness, if we ought not to use a stronger term, is traceable where we might, and indeed have a right to expect it would be repudiated with abhorrence and indignation. The fact is, the Christian precept "not to speak evil of one another" appears to be lost sight of, by those very persons with whom it ought to be a consideration over-ruling every other inferior motive, to practise what they are by profession habituated to commend in precept. It is contemptible enough in the indulgence, and but too dangerous in the consequences, when this System of Deterioration originates simply in a mere love of talking for talking sake. But when we observe almost every action of human conduct, whether it have reference to the domestic circle, the walks of private life, its occupations and enjoyments, or the broader path of public duty, interpreted by a standard whose avowed and specific object, judging it by the rule which itself unalterably pursues, is, without exception, to distort or disqualify, the pen of censure is authorized to write

Wilful and Wicked Malevolence against it. Whatever may be the outward professions and nominal claims of persons to Christianity in the belief or teaching of it, if facts be admitted as proofs, there can be little if any of the Essence of it, unless truth be proved to contradict itself, in the composition of individuals who practise this evil habit. It consists but in words, and these are as the empty air, which pass for nothing compared with deeds.

To live in daily apprehension that you are thus to be victimized by this Social Evil, is to exist under a state of Mental Excitement, against which few minds will be found to be proof in such a climate as Sierra Leone. Yet we are obliged to breathe the air of Vituperation and Slander there. A Moral atmosphere as noxious to the health as it is to the peace of the colonists of that deadly clime pervades it; and I wish I could say no other personal inconvenience or unhappy results were produced by the Deterioration System than temporary and trivial vexation. Name and Fortune have, and in not a solitary instance, been blighted and ruined by its destructive agency; and a most melancholy and cruel case of recent occurrence has proved, that unless there be some immediate and united public demonstration of disapproval of a system, which does not stop at running into criminal excesses of conspiracy against the reputation of individuals, to answer the purposes.

of expediency or revenge, neither Innocence, Virtue, nor Integrity are secure from the lying accusations of vindictive and interested creatures. Indeed, except for the misery and wretchedness which are produced by this state of things, the extravagance of such folly would provoke ridicule; for it does not signify what may be the subject or object of detraction. Whether table eloquence, or pulpit oratory, the private act or public transaction, the reading of a book or the prayers in church, the reserve of prudence, or familiarity of confidence, the cheerfulness of a happy and unenvious disposition, or the open and candid rebukes of disinterested uprightness; there is sure to be a "*But*," of Disqualification for almost everything you say and do.

It is not only, however, in the particulars which I have already enumerated that the Social System in Sierra Leone calls loudly for reform. The methods employed in the way of Amusements to pass away time, as it is expressed, are not by any means without their serious objections. Under the specious appearance and plausible name of a "Little Harmless Card-playing," Gambling is secretly carried on, I fear, to a considerable and ruinous extent; and I am not exaggerating the branch evils which arise out of this Monster Parent of such endless and bitter woe to thousands, when I affirm that the infatuation with which this propensity is in-

indulged dispossesses the mind of even any reverence for the Sabbath ! The Excesses which almost invariably attend upon the Gamester's career are not likely to lose any of their force or temptations in an African climate ; the allurements to indulge them are, on the contrary, as it is well known, more irresistible ; and the terrible consequences are premature death in the most unfit condition to meet it. It is shocking to think that Time and Life should be thus sacrificed to a Game of Chance, and that men can be found capable of consenting to earn a living from such unlawful practices. Yet, could the Dead speak or the Walls utter what has been and is still going on in this department of vice and folly, it would uphold to human eye a dark picture of human iniquity.

All this moral and social evil may, perhaps, be traced to three main causes ; the Want of that Female society which can by its numbers as well as intellectual and moral influence engage and direct the tastes and pursuits of the Majority ; the Neglect of those Internal resources which every one who is not the mere machine of outward circumstances, dependent entirely upon them for an adventitious supply of nourishment to the mind, will always possess in some degree and duly employ ; and the Absence of that Master-spirit which has both the will and ability to unite all the moral

force of experience, knowledge, and judgment, in giving a right impulse to the movements of society in all its relations and bearings, whether referable to pleasures, amusements, tastes, or business.

It must be admitted that the resources of recreation in many respects are limited ; yet not so much as to compel men to the alternative of adopting imprudent means of relief from the monotony and dulness of the place. That sameness which prevails and is more or less common to all isolated spots like Sierra Leone, is nevertheless, to no small extent, removed by the novelties which are afforded by the arrival of Merchant vessels and Men-of-War which frequent this part of the coast. There is, also, a respectable Book-society : Periodicals of every description are attainable ; there are delightful rides ; and, I must do the Colonists justice to add, a liberality in entertainment invariably shown on all occasions, both private and public. So that it only requires a disposition to please and be pleased, and to make the most of such resources as are attainable to secure to one another a society accordant in its wishes and united in its efforts, to become both agreeable and profitable. Whoever by his prudence and skill is instrumental in bringing about such a state of things in the colony, will prove its best friend and deserve its warmest gratitude ; for as it is at present consti-

tuted, nothing can be more deplorable and discouraging. And if, with health and strength to bear up against such an enemy to peace of mind, the trial be found severe to the English resident, what must be his misery to have to combat it under the sufferings of a protracted and dangerous fever?

Some attempts were made not long since to establish a series of lectures on various subjects; but I believe they were soon discontinued. Every struggle of this nature is highly honourable to those who make them; but until a better understanding exists between those with whom is vested the power of giving such a bias to society, all efforts at either mental or moral improvement will be abortive. The European's Pride will not submit to be second in the list when a movement of the above description is begun. The Native Vanity and Love of Consequence are too fond of the gratification of being alone and foremost in suggesting what is calculated to advance the standard of intelligence and general improvement, to allow them to see the policy of aiming more at a unity of sentiment and design in whatever is undertaken for the general advantage. There is, moreover, a wretched petty feeling very dominant in a certain class, to thwart every laudable desire to facilitate a more agreeable intercourse in the

community; and this does not spring from any discernible and previously predisposing cause, but is the sole effect of that narrowness of mind and illiberality of views and sentiments, the common consequences of that arrogance and ignorance which are always inseparable from and found amongst persons, whose natural selfishness has not been removed by an extensive acquaintance with men and manners.

The truth is, the existing elements of society in Sierra Leone—I am to be understood, of course, as speaking of Free-town chiefly—are radically corrupt and altogether uncongenial to such a reformation as could be wished; and the European portion of it, with very few exceptions, present the worst side of the picture. I do not say it is utterly incapable of improvement; but every one in the colony knows as well as I do myself, that in the present generation, as matters stand, there is little hope of seeing the change we are speaking of effected. For one powerful and growing obstacle to it is, the feeling entertained and openly avowed by some persons—a feeling nevertheless as unjust, as illiberal and without foundation,—that Englishmen are not the Friends of the Natives, and only settle there for personal aggrandizement: that it would be better if they were away for they are not wanted. All this is very fine; but, neverthe-

less, only try the experiment and deprive it of every thing that is European: leave Sierra Leone to itself with nothing English about it, and I will venture an opinion that, before a twelvemonth has passed away, such a state of confusion, disorder, and anarchy will predominate as will make them soon and deeply regret the absence of that mighty influence which belongs to English rule alone to possess and impart.

There is another fact deserving mention, as it bears considerably on society, and it is the gross Indecency of Manners, which is as disgusting to witness as it is significative of a low state of morals. It is utterly out of the question that refinement and a sense of modesty can be either promoted or cherished, whilst that indifference to the rules of propriety in dress, which is now so observable, is suffered to continue. Virtue and Modesty are closely allied; and so long as the violation of one of the most important laws of civilized humanity shocks, as it does the eye, in Free-town, Looseness of Morals will prevail. I do not speak positively, but I believe some regulations are in force for the better observance of decorum in this particular. Be this the case or not, it is evident from the liberties which the great bulk of the common people take in this respect, that they are not enforced as they ought to be,

or else their disregard of them is winked at. Children of both sexes may be seen at an advanced age, in the public streets and places of frequent resort, altogether unclad; and it is beyond the freedom of the press to describe the offensive examples of brutal indecency which are every where to be seen. I have heard it maintained that it is impracticable to effect anything like an extensive and uniform observance of good manners in this respect, where there is such an influx of so many different tribes and strangers from the distant parts of the colony. Others will excuse the nuisance on the ground of climate or national custom. All these pleas for the admission of practices in themselves offensive, and serving, moreover, to encourage vice, can never be tolerated with safety, and ought to be laid aside for vigorous measures to preserve some sort of external decency, and avoid the necessity of those spectacles which even men of sobered tastes and educated minds turn from with aversion.

A very disgraceful and licentious kind of meeting, familiar to most persons by the name of "Dignity Balls," is unhappily for the moral and religious prosperity of the community in considerable request amongst a certain class, and, to the shame and infamy of its supporters, patronised in a manner and spirit which would be scarcely cre-

dited. It is unnecessary and impossible to say more of these assemblies than that they supply the most fatal and poisonous means of corruption, and dress temptation in all the fascinating charms and inviting forms of Immorality and Excess. The natural tendency to self-indulgence, so conspicuous in the youngest of the Natives, the strong passion of the African nature, heightened and provoked by such, encouragements must and do operate too successfully in disseminating the Seeds of Vice, and leave no room for wonder that Virtue and Religion should be at so low a value as they are. Shame on those of our country who can descend to the act of being of the number of such as thus practically and undisguisedly teach the multitude to "sin with a cart rope!" And yet it is a well-known circumstance, that a sanction is given to these Dignity Balls, substantially and personally, by individuals whose standing in society there would not be advanced by such imprudence, and who would be mortified and ashamed if they could believe they were even suspected of conniving at them.

I have often pitied and admired the noble disinterestedness and self-denying affection of our married countrywomen, who, relinquishing the comforts and decencies of civilized life, are not only subject to so many miseries and sufferings incident to such a state of society and so horrible

a climate, but are exposed to the painful contact of so much ignorance and barbarism. Yet it is to the Virtues, the gentle but all-powerful control of woman in the exalted characters of the faithful wife and pious parent, the Christian mistress and enlightened friend, that we can alone look with confidence for an Influence which is able to counteract and remove so sad a state of things. It is only from the Circle of Female society which Education has adorned and Christianity exalted, that a Community in any part of the world can derive a taste for what is excellent, and preference for what is amiable and good. As that increases in Sierra Leone we may hope for improvement in Morals and Manners. We are not altogether without it now; let us respect and profit by it more than we do. The conversation of an intelligent, modest woman is surely preferable to the noisy mirth and questionable companionship of either the Gambling-table or the Dignity Ball; and the pleasures of rational and lawful enjoyment can never be more harmless or profitable, than when sought and appreciated in her domestic circle.

CHAPTER XX.

PRIVATE RESIDENCES.—IMPROVEMENTS IN BUILDING.—DANGER FROM THE PRESENT PRACTICE OF ROOFING HUTS AND SMALL HOUSES.—THE RACE COURSE.—ROAD TO THE VILLAGE OF KISSY; KISSY VILLAGE.—REFLECTIONS.—VILLAGE CHILDREN.—BUSH FIRES.—WATERFALL.—VILLAGE BURIAL PLACES, AND REFLECTIONS ON THEM.—NEGLECT OF PAGAN LIBERATED AFRICANS IN THEIR SEPULTURES.—THE HOSPITAL AT KISSY: LUNATICS.—MILITARY HOSPITAL, ITS SUPERVISION AND ARRANGEMENTS; REFLECTIONS UPON IT AS A SPHERE OF MINISTERIAL LABOUR.—CAPABILITIES OF THE AFRICAN FOR A SOLDIER'S PROFESSION: GARRISON SCHOOLS: WANT OF ELEMENTARY BOOKS.—DISCIPLINE AND STATE OF THE SOLDIERS.

I AM afraid my reader will complain of the dry disquisition of the last chapter; but it was necessary to give him some idea of the state of society. I will now do my best to make amends by reverting to general topics. And I will begin with Private Residences. The style of these is not amongst the most insignificant proofs of the advancement of civilization. Improvements in building and attention to the conveniences and comforts of the dwelling-house bespeak a progress

in the Ideas and Wishes of men, which proves that a desire for better things has been awakened in a community. The demand, too, for houses in Free-town is greater than can be satisfactorily answered, and rentals are consequently exorbitant. It is not so much, however, in the town as in the country that individual taste and judgment display themselves to advantage, although in the former there are some good specimens of building. There is the residence of my lamented friend, the Judge of the Mixed Commission, which for convenience and comfort is equal to, if not better than any other Private dwelling in Free-town. It has every accommodation which you would find in a gentleman's house in England, is spacious, well-built, and agreeably located, but now, alas! desolate; for its owner has, like too many before him, only lived long enough in that fearful climate to prove that it still is, what in all probability it will ever be,—the burial-place of our ill-fated countrymen whom necessity compels to seek a home and maintenance there. How many happy hours I have passed under that roof it is useless now to dwell upon—they cannot return! Its master is gone! and I shall, if I return there, feel the want of a Home and a Friend, an intelligent Companion and a liberally-minded Christian, whose benevolence was only equalled by his integrity and ability as a

Public Officer and his uniformly gentlemanly conduct. My good friend, the Colonial Surgeon, is in possession of a very pretty Snuggery; and there is the town house of the late acting Queen's Advocate, Mr. Dougan, which would for its neatness and taste equal anything of the kind in England. The Grammar School of the Rev. Mr. Peyton, the Church Missionary House, the Wesleyan Missionary Abode, and several others, all afford a pleasing testimony to the rapid advance which is making in a due appreciation of the importance of a good style of building. Brick and Slate are now in common use in the colony; and stone, of which there is an abundance, is also employed. And it is to be hoped that the time is not far distant, when the Safety of Free-town will be more permanently secured from the danger and destruction of fire, by a more general practice of substituting for the roofs of the huts and smaller houses a more safe material than what is in common request at present. I have, myself, seen one of the large huts or caravansaries in the town burnt to the ground in a very few moments; and were it not for the Military, (for the sluggishness and slowness of the natives in assisting at such a juncture is abominable), it is difficult to foresee the consequences. As there is no fire-engine, should the wind be blowing in

a direction where these huts were thickly packed together, the whole town might soon be in flames. In the instance just referred to, for I was present at the accident, I observed crowds of fellows standing idly near the spot without offering the least assistance, whilst soldiers, officers, and gentlemen were swallowing the smoke in their efforts to stay the conflagration.

The notions of people respecting the true position of Sierra Leone in all its details of local circumstances, resources, daily life, attainments, as well as deficiencies, advantages and disadvantages, its economy—political and social—are not only under-rated but very erroneous. Conveniences, comforts, luxuries are possessed and anxiously sought after. It is, indeed, inseparable from the progress of civilization that wants should multiply; and as these increase, the means, of course, for satisfying them will be proportionably regained. In no respect is this more perceptible than in the attention which is paid to, and the expense which is bestowed in adapting the Private residence to European ideas of what is requisite for style as well as accommodation. My attention has repeatedly been called to this circumstance, as amongst the characteristics of an Emulation, which speaks most favourably for the progress of African Civilization.

"The Retreat," which is the residence of Judge Car, is pleasantly situated about a mile out of the town and not far from the Race-course. It stands back some distance from the road and is approached by a pretty drive through a line of fine fruit trees. Close upon the sea-shore, and embedded in shrubbery, it looks upon a circular carriage sweep and field of rich grass. An exceedingly picturesque view of Free-town, the Colonial church, and Shipping is before you; and a cheerful yet undisturbed promenade along the beetling cliff which overhangs the beach is at your choice. The house itself is commodious, and might with some trifling alterations and additions be made a most desirable abode for a Bishop, whenever the Colony is blessed with a Spiritual head for its Church. The grounds attached to it are extensive and well laid out, and have a very beautiful avenue of noble trees. It was formerly the property of the Rev. Mr. Morgan, the Colonial Chaplain, some years ago. Its convenient distance from the town and retirement make it a most charming spot, and some of my most profitable and pleasing hours of recreation I have passed there in the society of the Judge and his family.

The country house of Mr. Dougan is another good specimen of taste, and shows the attention paid to the construction of dwellings. This stands

in a different part of the suburbs of the town, and has more of the appearance of the Villa character. The Pleasure grounds about it are exceedingly pretty, and the Kitchen garden, which is watered by a running stream, is stored with every variety of fruit and vegetable. On the Kissy road, and in the neighbourhood of the Race-course, are two more private residences of equal accommodation and taste, which, with their luxurious bamboos overarching and shading the broad and lengthy walks, form a most inviting and rural arbour. One of these houses is occupied by the Spanish Consul, the other belongs to a gentleman and merchant of the colony. The internal comforts and conveniences of these several residences are on a scale of proportion equal to what they promise externally. From the piazzas of these last-named houses you obtain a fine view of the Missionary College, the numerous objects of interest to be seen in this part of the neighbourhood of Free-town, and particularly the Race-course, which is about a mile round and a spot of great beauty. It is a perfect picture of an amphitheatre, which in the rainy season is covered with luxuriant verdure. Lofty hills and mountains with their bold groupings enclose it in on every side, except towards the sea. Races are held here, once in the year and for the time

cause considerable bustle and excitement. They are conducted, I believe, according to the usual formularies and etiquette; and gentlemen, for the most part, ride their own ponies, for horses they can scarcely be called. As a Ride, the Course is very pleasurable from its picturesque appearance, and is rather a favourite resort in the evening; horsemen and horsewomen, vehicles of various kinds, and pedestrians congregate here for recreation and recognition, and as much for a little gossip and light talk as anything else.

Along the skirts of this ground to the right, as you approach it from the Kissy road bridge, is your way to another village of that name. There is not so much either in the ride to this village, or the village itself, to engage your attention as most other places, yet it is not entirely without some attractions. There is a pretty little purling stream which crosses the road soon after you pass the Course, where the Natives with their calabashes and buckets (which they may be almost always seen filling from this water), are ready to greet you with a friendly smile and salutation. A sudden and steep descent then brings you to a dilapidated wooden bridge, over which it was no easy nor safe task to cross when I left the colony last. Under this the mountain torrent rolls its waters from the heights to the right of you, in

the rainy season, dashing over rock and fallen tree and through the almost impervious bush, throwing aloft into the air its spray and foam, whilst its sound can be heard at a considerable distance. To the left of you, near this spot, is another cascade of water, which, skirting a rocky ledge of some breadth, greets the streams from the mountains on the right, and eddying together in a large basin, naturally formed, they flow onwards until they are no longer heard nor seen. The variegated leaves and the splendid creepers, set off by the gay foliage hanging over and drooping into the stream, which they nearly conceal, are extremely lovely. In some parts the road is nearly blocked up with large rocks, which if broken and thrown into the hollows would help to break the abruptness of the descents and afford a clearer pathway. The bridges, too, it is to be hoped, are now put in a state of substantial repair, as there was, and is still, if they are not mended, the fairest possible chance of those whose duties require them to be often on the Kissy road, breaking their own as well as horses' necks in passing them. I believe that there have been, indeed, some hair-breadth escapes from loss of life and limb. Except the Hospital and Assistant Colonial Surgeon's house, there is little to notice here. The Church is a plain building; and the

Parsonage pretty enough and very comfortable. But what it wanted in locals to interest you was for some time compensated by the kindness and hospitality of the unaffected Church Missionary, the Rev. Mr. Haastrup, a sincere and excellent minister, and Dr. Clarke, who, at the time I speak of, was the Assistant Colonial Surgeon. The former has paid the great debt of nature, and the latter is now resident in Free-town, so that there are no inducements to resume the evening rides I was accustomed to take to enjoy a little of Chirurgical philosophy, or gently indulge in mutual complaints against climate, society, and servants, unless we had the happiness to see the straw hat, white nag, and one spur of my good friend the Colonial Surgeon slowly appearing above the hill, on the top of which stands all worth naming as relates to human abodes. Then melancholy and moping would be forced for awhile to give place to a merry laugh and some trite and dry saying of the veteran doctor, who is not so much the official or professionalist as to consider the poet's idea, "*dulce est desipere in loco*," or the attempt to dispel the dumps of his friends by putting them in good humour with themselves, either a sin or a folly. For my own part I should be sorry to do such injustice to human nature as to suppose her incapable of, or unfitted for, wordly enjoyments with-

out the necessity of being censurable for allowing a smile to alter the outlines of the countenance, or an expression of heartfelt happiness and mirth to declare itself in a laugh. Yet there are those in Sierra Leone who have enough of the hypocrite or fool in their nature and disposition to make even these things matters of censure and even criminality. Let them indulge these very primitive ideas of their own so long as they do not give a mischievous reality to them by making them instruments of injury to their neighbours. All I can say is, I can revert to those seasons of cheerfulness, such as I am now recalling, without regret, and certainly with much pleasure. What is more delightful or desirable than to steal away from ears and eyes and tongues, which can neither hear nor see nor say any good thing of you, to where a welcome and a sofa are at your choice, and the beautiful flowers and no less beautiful birds greet you in every direction, as seated by the window you drink in undisturbed the pure sea-breeze that blows in upon you from the ocean. Then you can saunter along through the low and expansive flats of that tall and downy grass, so useful to the poor native for thatching his humble hut, and which, waving gracefully all around you, almost inclines you to fancy yourself on some vast English moor or

common, until you come to the Lower Hospital, which stands near the sea and is a useful and indispensable appendage to the Upper one. Or for a change you may stroll along the streets, and while away half an hour by listening to some secret and musical infant voice singing in the fulness of its heart's content some simple native song, or hymning the praise of its Creator from amongst the Mango and Orange trees, beneath whose fruitful shade your little songstress is reclining or sitting as happy as simple innocence can make her. The little naked urchins, too, with their large black eyes brightened with smiles, and their exquisitely white and regular teeth displaying themselves, as with open mouths wide enough to swallow one of their own oranges they salute you with their "Daddee, Daddee, good morning," (although it is evening)—"please give me copper," will remind you, although of different complexion from yourself, of your own days of boyhood, and awaken in you half sorrowful, half pleasing emotions. Sometimes, however, these appeals to your good nature are very pertinacious and made by older petitioners and women who neither want nor deserve it. But it is really amusing to see the black juveniles tumbling about and scrambling for the pence, "*secundum naturam*," so delighted are they, and pleased with the fun of searching

for the humble treasure, which they set about with laughable perseverance. It is time, however, to return from my perambulations, for the Doctors are both looking out from the Piazza windows with some little anxiety, and for a very good reason,—it is Supper-time. Do not be startled, Reader, when you are informed that the Supper table is no novelty in Sierra Leone. It is enjoyed, I believe, by many there as much as in England; and, after a hard day's work, a constitutional walk, and an early dinner, is a very acceptable and sociable meal. Only imagine such a scene as three or four human beings in a moon-lit Piazza busily employed over a Tin of Salmon, a grilled Fowl, probably some Bloaters, hard biscuits, fashionable Bass, and Baked Yams. Cigars follow the substantials, with what else you please, until it is time to mount your horse, or take to your sofa.

At the time of the year when they prepare the land for cultivation, the Bush Fires on the hills are seen to great effect from the piazza of the Assistant-Surgeon's residence, at Kissy; and the crackling noise of the flame consuming the bush along the tops and sides of the mountains in its rapid course is very striking in the midst of the stillness which is unbroken by any other sound; more so, perhaps, than at Godrich, which I have

already mentioned, on account of the nearness of the hills, which appear to almost overhang you.

The population of Kissy is small, and the village, like all others where Missionary zeal and labour have bestowed their valuable gifts, has all those signs of gradual improvement which invariably, sooner or later, follow the course of Christianity. But it has not the romance and picturesque of nature, like many other places; for two unvarying objects are always present—the sea on one side, and the undiversified slopes of the mountains on the other. Before taking leave of this place, however, I would mention one spot of interest which is an exception to the general sameness of this locality, and it is the fall of a body of water into a creek on the eastern side of the flat of grass I have described. The banks of this stream are a lovely picture of the richness and verdure of that climate: nor must I pass over that enclosure, visible and not far from the Lower Hospital, where, side by side, Oppressor and Oppressed, the Christian and Idolater, the Ethiopian who could only “see God in clouds, and hear him in the wind,” and the Enlightened Believer, whose spiritual perception knew Him as the Hope of all the ends of the world—mingle their earthly remains in that common dust to which they have returned. There is something in these burial-

places in Sierra Leone which always calls forth in my mind mournful and distressing associations. I hardly know why, but they are, in everything to my feelings, so unlike the churchyards of our country places in England, where "the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep." Whether it is that they are, like the Houses of Worship, *unconsecrated*, or that there is *not that pious care* bestowed on them, as in Europe, I am at a loss to say. In the one I can feel a mournful yet consoling pleasure to bend over the entombed remains of a friend or relative; in the other all those disagreeable and distressing sensations are awakened, which a sense of neglect and a want of something to hallow these solemn abodes of mortality, irresistibly call forth. There is one circumstance I cannot abstain from mentioning, and I have noted it not only in Sierra Leone but elsewhere on the Coast, that large spaces of ground are used for Interment without any care being taken to protect the dead by some kind of enclosure from desecration. This indifference to a concern for the due preservation of him who was made in the image of God from insult and profanation when consigned to the grave, evinces a recklessness for what is most sacred, which argues little in favour of the humanity, civilization, or Christianity of those whose duty and business it is to do justice to

the Dead as well as the Living. And is the poor Liberated African to be denied even a few boards to his lifeless body because he dies a Pagan? Do not many of those die Pagans in unbelief and disobedience, notwithstanding their nominal title to Christianity, who receive all the pageantry of a formal funeral? Such is, nevertheless, the fact, that numbers of those ill-used creatures are *coffinless* when committed to their last homes.

With regard to the inmates of the hospitals, every attention and kindness is shown them, as my occasional visits to those receptacles for the sick with my friend Dr. Clarke when he had the care of them enable me to attest. And the accommodation for the sick is on a large scale, the upper hospital being capacious enough to contain, with ease and safety within its walls, at least 500 individuals. But I think it would be a very great improvement if the unfortunate Lunatics had a separate asylum to themselves, instead of being placed, as they now are, in the same establishment with other patients of sane mind. As I said before, I once had a peep at them, and never wish to see them again. Idiotcy and Insanity in the European are instances of human misery sad enough to witness; but in the Negro and African they increase in the terror and disgusting characters of the malady, too horrible to contemplate

without producing the most revolting and humiliating impressions on the human mind.

Whilst on the subject of Hospitals, I would observe, that which is devoted to Military and Navy purposes claims the reader's attention for its excellent internal arrangements, conveniencies, and airiness. For situation it could not be better placed, and it must be a satisfaction of no common kind to the British public to know, that in the skill, kindness, and activity of the Medical Officers of the Garrison the African Soldier as well as the Man-of-war sailor always enjoy the benefit of able practitioners and judicious friends. No praise can be too great for the indefatigable zeal, untiring patience, and admirable tact of Dr. Lawson of the Staff, whose official duties as well as private worth cannot be too highly estimated by the Service. My visits to the hospital have always been amongst the most interesting of my own professional duties: and the uniform readiness of the medical officers on all occasions to assist and co-operate with me in carrying out the objects of my ministry, have, I believe, materially helped to produce many good results. It is only delightful to observe how easily and happily a clergyman may work upon the minds and hearts of the most unpromising and strange beings whom it is his lot to encounter in such a variety

of temper, disposition, and character as must necessarily and unavoidably be found in an establishment of this kind by a cautious and not too hasty and formal an exercise of his functions. On the part of the Native soldiers, even with those who are not yet acquainted with our language, I always met with the most respectful attention and apparent thankfulness for any little attentions shown them. And, so far as externals promise favourably, there is never wanting a devotional spirit. Those who can speak English, which the greater number of them do, join heartily in the Prayers which I read to them on Sunday. But the brave tars of our Men-of-war, poor fellows, are not so easily managed, and require a treatment of a very different nature to bring them to anything like serious reflection. Jack is not to be dealt with even in religious matters as a child. He will listen to you—and own all you say to be very good, and thank you, if you only manage him dexterously. Attempt, however, to do too much with him at a time, and you may as well strive to move a rock as to get him to pay the slightest regard to you. I soon discovered this in Hospital Ministry and failed not to profit by it. Jack has many good qualities when he is of the right stamp; and when once his confidence is gained and the way is prepared by a little

preliminary management for religious topics, you may mould him to your pleasure. I remember a manly fellow being brought to the hospital whose leg had been frightfully injured by a fall from the mast, and who was for many weeks an inmate of the hospital. I forget now whether it was amputated or not; it was, at all events, useless. I was myself only convalescing from severe illness and could scarcely crawl about. Whenever the poor fellow began to grumble over his accident—and Jack, at times, is an adept at this—I would put him in good humour by telling him I thought he would yet be able to mount aloft better with one leg than I could do with two. “Well, my friend,” I would say to him, “you’re a pretty heavy weight, but you managed to come down to your bearings with more good luck than most of your messmates would have done,—you ought to be thankful that your life is spared; why you will still be able to do well and pick up many an honest penny.” Jack would laugh, shake his head, and look at me in a manner which told me he was pleased. “Very good, sir, but I wish you would get me something to read, I’m so dull.” I would purposely ask him what he wanted. “Oh, a newspaper will do, or some book if you’ve got it, I don’t care much what it is.” It was clear Jack was not yet fit for serious

reading; a little more patience and humouring, and the poor fellow would be accessible to better things. I would take care, therefore, that an Illustrated Newspaper should be sent to him together with some other interesting and instructive work. As soon as he was tired of the one he would open the other, and thus was he unconsciously led to a more serious kind of reading and thinking also, and at last to the Bible itself. It is with the Soul as with the Body; with Sinners as with Sick folk; there are not two alike in disease or constitution, in mind or temperament; and without a careful preparatory treatment an ultimate cure may never be obtained in either case. It was a long time before the poor fellow got out of hospital, but at last I missed him in one of my weekly visits. Glad enough he was, without doubt, to get on his own element again.

There was one unfortunate being about this time in the hospital, whose disease was, I suppose, Atrophy, for he was, literally, a skeleton. I was not myself then particularly corpulent, but really could not help declining any brotherhood with this fleshless being. What rather amused me in his case was his insatiable appetite, which would never suffer him to be satisfied with his ordinary allowance of food (which was abundant), but urge him to commit depredations, if he could, on his

sick neighbours' rations; so that he was a kind of terror to his fellow-sufferers, who were always obliged to keep a sharp look-out. He was very good tempered, and, to all appearance, patient; and seemed to enjoy the idea exceedingly when I would say that we both wanted a little more flesh, but I thought he would get fat before I did.

The soldiers, I believe, generally retain good health except when first received into the service as recruits, when it is not to be wondered at that the sudden change of diet and manner of living, so much better than anything they have been previously accustomed to should for awhile be productive of some slight and temporary inconvenience. To the best of my observation and experience, they do not certainly die off in the numbers or so fast as I have noticed in the Bahamas.

One reason for this may be the purity and excellent quality of the spring water in Sierra Leone, which is superior to anything of the kind procurable in Nassau, New Providence. The question has frequently been put to me, what the capabilities of the African are for the profession of Arms, and it will bear a satisfactory answer. I think I may venture to affirm that, generally speaking, they make very good soldiers. Some of them are remarkably fine men, and for martial look and figure would not disgrace any regiment. They are

capital sentinels and possess a high degree of courage; indeed, I do not think they know what fear is. Led by able officers they would stand against any opposition as long as most soldiers. I have often noticed with surprise the astonishing change in the man which a few weeks' good feeding and drilling have wrought; and they appear to me to understand and properly estimate the improvement of their condition. They soon acquire sufficient knowledge of our language for practical purposes; and the opportunities now afforded in the Garrison Schools for learning to read and write have considerably facilitated their progress. The Garrison School in Sierra Leone is conducted by a Native Schoolmaster. An European instructor would have been better but was not to be obtained; the person, however, at present in that capacity gives satisfaction, I believe, to the Garrison as well as myself, and much benefit has arisen from his appointment. The sad hindrance to any considerable or permanent benefit from such a provision is the want of a small Lending Library and elementary Books of Instruction for both children and adult scholars. And since it would take so small a sum to furnish these necessary helps, it is surprising that they are withheld when such advantages would be derived from them to the Service. So numerous and

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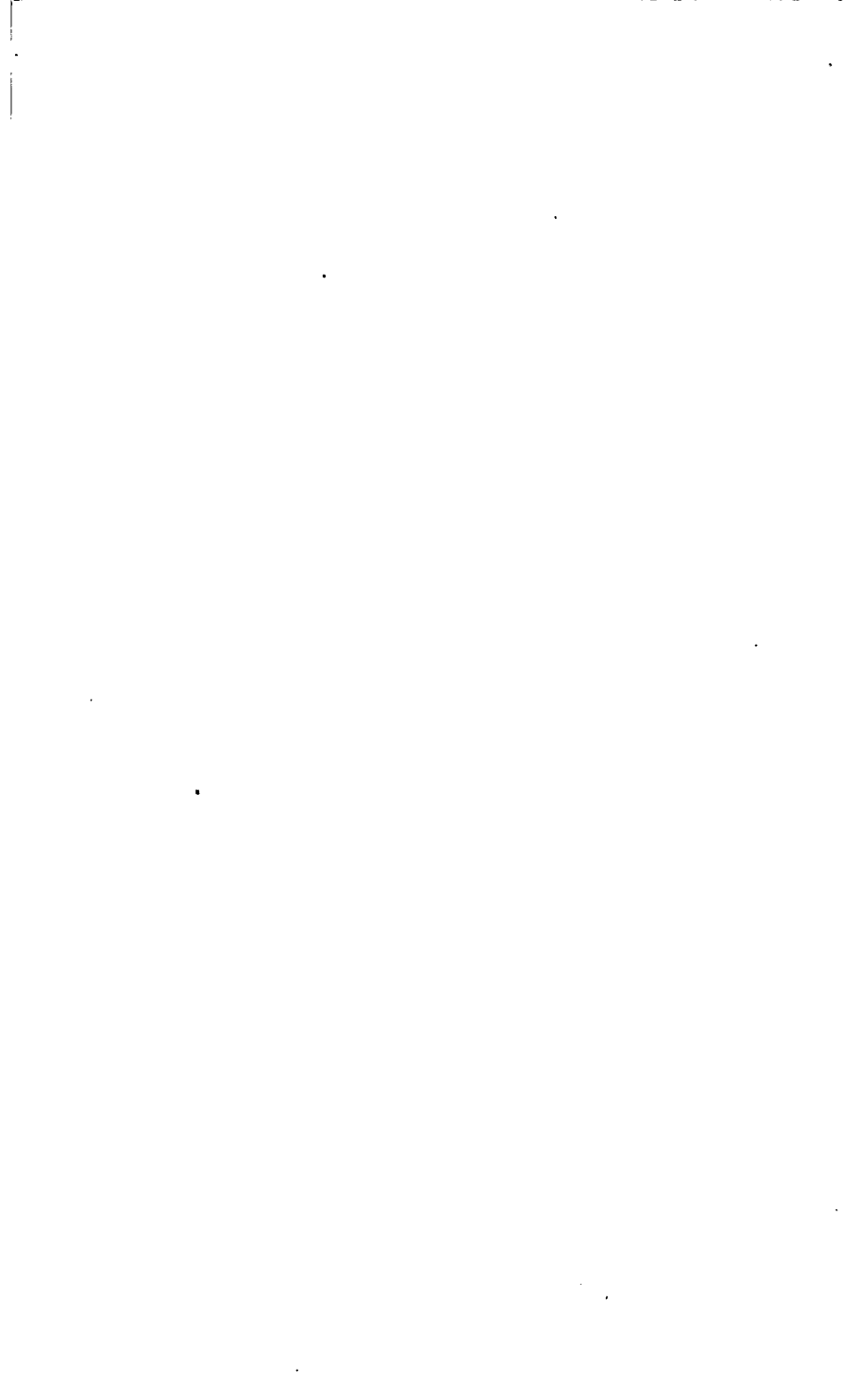
cheap, so simple and felicitously adapted to lead the mind in the track of useful and general knowledge are our Elementary Works, and so anxious and pleased are the poor Native Soldiers to obtain them, that for themselves and children to be without the opportunity of possessing them is truly an injustice. Upwards of ten years' varied experience as garrison chaplain abroad to the native troops, I have seen the benefits of education too strongly manifested, not to earnestly hope they will not be shortened through a deficiency of means. Every sensible and pious man knows that to put no other books but the Prayer-book and Bible into the hands of black children and adults is not the way to impart to them that general information which is one of the most powerful auxiliaries to the acquisition of Religious knowledge itself. For general good behaviour, sobriety and discipline, the African soldier claims his fair proportion of praise. I have seen some of the Corps turn out to Parade and go through their drill in a manner that would reflect credit on any body of men ; and whilst up the Gambia at Bathurst, the Commandant, to try the quickness and readiness of those under his command, ordered them out in the middle of the night without letting them have the slightest idea of his intention. As soon as the bugle sounded they were up and to arms in a mo-

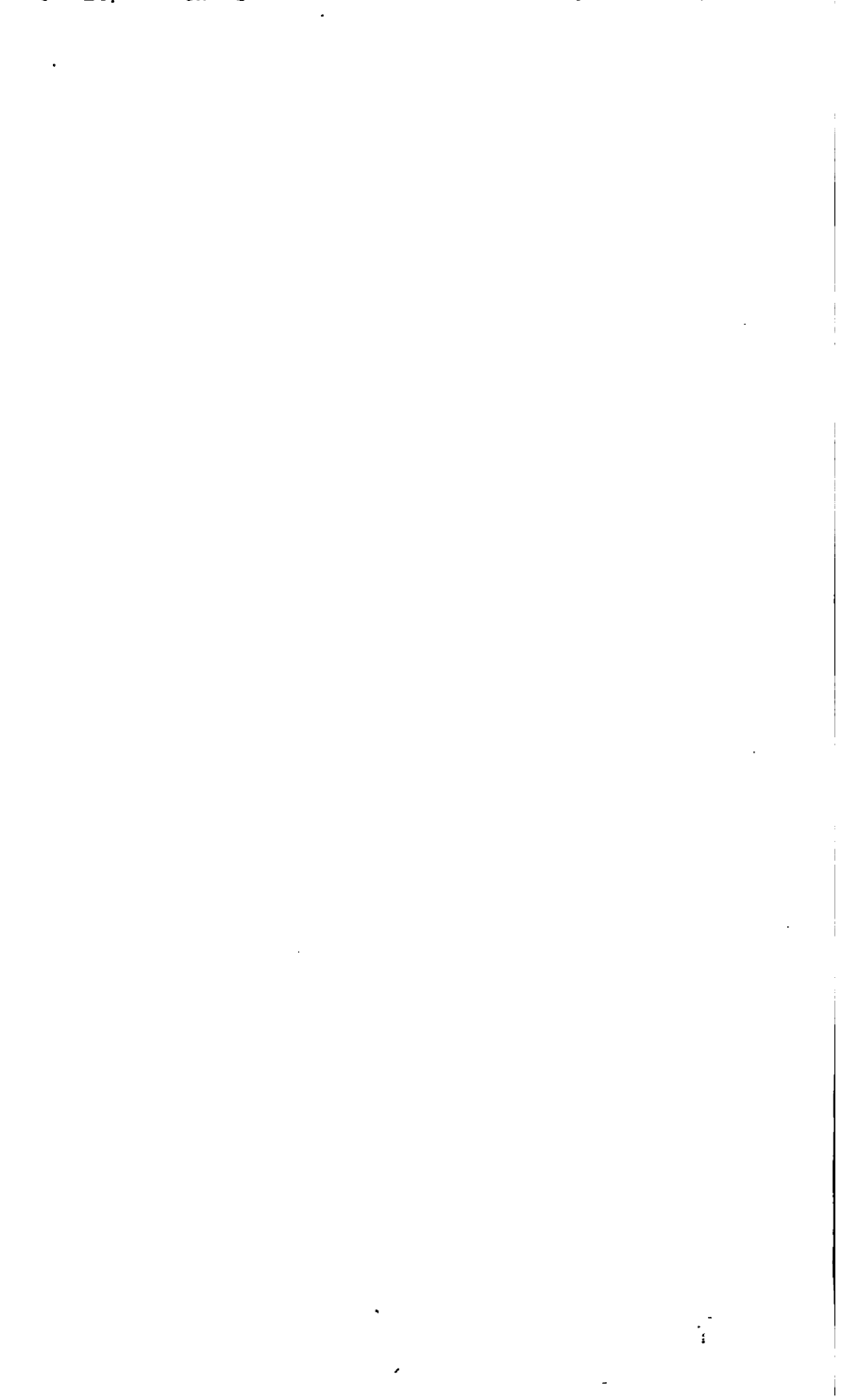
ment and on the Parade-ground in heavy marching order with a celerity, which surprised even the Commandant himself who timed them. These men, however, have their peculiarities and prejudices as well as their White neighbours; for when the present hat worn by the Infantry was introduced at New Providence, it was highly laughable to observe the aversion and reluctance with which they were brought to use it. The idea I imagine, which they had of it was, that it was good, for women but not soldiers, being smaller and more compact than the old style. But Time and Use which reconcile us to most things have left them quite at ease with it, and they now wear it with a very good grace.

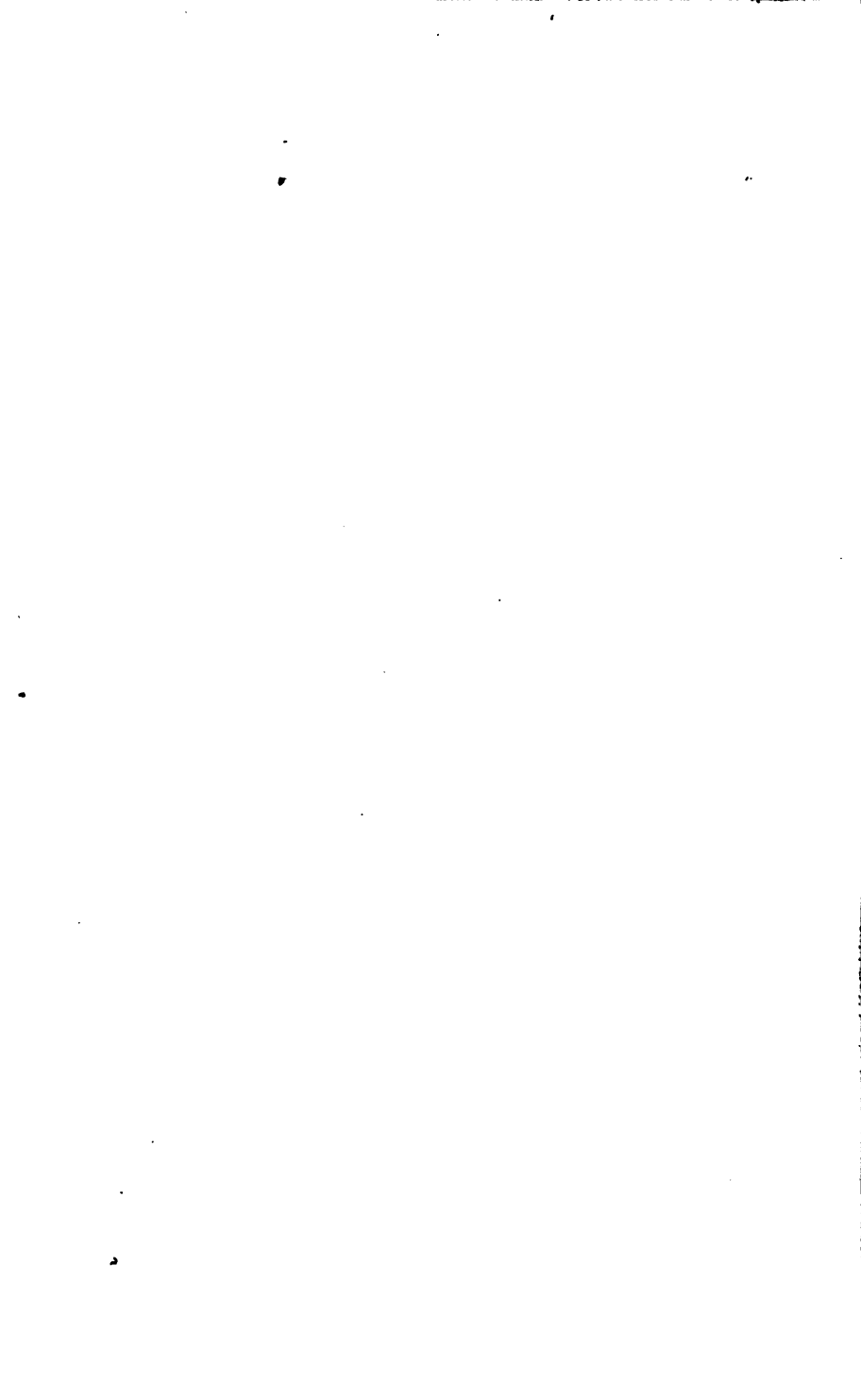
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